



S&H Form: (2/01)  
Attorney Docket No. 1341.1121

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of:

Tetsushi KOBAYASHI, et al.

Application No.: 10/083,488

Group Art Unit: 3625

Confirmation No.: 6513

Filed: February 27, 2002

Examiner: William J. Allen

For: METHOD OF SELLING PRODUCT ONLINE AND COMPUTER PRODUCT

**SUBMISSION OF CERTIFIED TRANSLATION OF PRIORITY DOCUMENT**

**Mail Stop Amendment**  
Commissioner for Patents  
PO Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Applicants submit hereby a certified translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-340808, filed November 6, 2001, from which the subject application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. §119, along with the statement required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.55 (a)(4).

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Statement required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.55 (a)(4)  
Certified translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-340808



VERIFICATION OF TRANSLATION

I, Wakako Anzai, of c/o SAKAI International Patent Office, 2-5, Kasumigaseki 3-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-6019 Japan, hereby declare that I am a translator of the document attached, and attached document is a true and correct translation made by me to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-340808, filed on November 6, 2001.

Signature of Translator: \_\_\_\_\_

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'W' followed by a horizontal line.

Wakako Anzai

Date : August 22, 2006



(TRANSLATION)

PATENT OFFICE  
JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

This is to certify that the annexed is a true copy of the  
following application as filed with this Office.

DATE OF APPLICATION : November 6, 2001

APPLICATION NUMBER : Japanese Patent Application  
No. 2001-340808

APPLICANT(S) : FUJITSU LIMITED

Issued : January 18, 2002

Commissioner, Kozo OIKAWA  
Patent Office

(Official Seal)

Certificate No. 2004-3117350



[NAME OF DOCUMENT] APPLICATION FOR PATENT

[REFERENCE NO.] 0151137

[FILING DATE] November 6, 2001

[ADDRESS TO] COMMISSIONER, PATENT OFFICE

[INTL' CLASSIFICATION] G06F 19/00

[TITLE OF THE INVENTION] Product sales method and product sales program

[NUMBER OF CLAIMS] 10

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[KIND] DEPOSITED

[NUMBER] 036711

[AMOUNT OF FEE] 21000

[LIST OF ATTACHED DOCUMENTS]

[ ITEM ] SPECIFICATION 1

[ ITEM ] DRAWINGS 1

[ ITEM ] ABSTRACT 1

[ NUMBER ] 9717671



[Type of Document] Specification

[Title of the Invention] Product sales method and  
product sales program

[Scope of Claims for Patent]

5           [Claim 1] A product sales method in which products  
are sold online by a plurality of stores based on a product  
catalog that comprises information on a plurality of  
products, comprising:

an unsellable product management step in which the  
10 management of unsellable products that cannot be sold is  
performed at each store; and

an introduction step in which, when a product  
selected by a purchaser from said product catalog is one  
of said unsellable products that cannot be sold by said  
15 store visited online by said purchaser, said purchaser  
is introduced to another store that can sell said product.

[Claim 2] The product sales method according to  
claim 1, wherein in the unsellable product management  
step, a selection, at least, of a product from said  
20 product catalog by a purchaser is used as a trigger which  
updates management information on said unsellable  
product.

[Claim 3] The product sales method according to  
claim 1 or 2, wherein there is further included a stock  
25 shortage product management step, in which stock shortage

products, which are products that can be sold by a host store, but are out of stock at other stores from among said plurality of stores, are managed, and in the introduction step, said purchaser is introduced to  
5 another store that can sell said product based on the information of said stock shortage products.

[Claim 4] The product sales method according to claim 3, wherein, in the stock shortage management step, a selection, at least, of a product from said product  
10 catalog by a purchaser is used as a trigger in order to update management information on said stock shortage product.

[Claim 5] The product sales method according to any of claims 1 to 4, wherein there is further included  
15 an introduction fee payment step, in which an introduction fee is paid to a store introducing a purchaser from a store to which said purchaser is introduced.

[Claim 6] The product sales method according to any of claims 1 to 5, in which there is further included: a manufacturer order step in which, when a product selected by a purchaser from the product catalog is one of said unsellable products that cannot be sold by the store visited online by said purchaser, said product is ordered from a manufacturer; and a selection step in which, when a product selected by a purchaser from the product catalog is one of said unsellable products that cannot be sold by the store visited online by said purchaser, either the manufacturer order step or the introduction step is selected.

[Claim 7] A product sales method in which products are sold online by a plurality of stores based on a product catalog that comprises information on a plurality of products, comprising:

an unsellable product management step in which the management of unsellable products that cannot be sold is performed at each store; and

a new shipment step in which, when a product selected by a purchaser from said product catalog is one of said unsellable products that cannot be sold by said store visited online by said purchaser, new shipment processing is executed to ship a new supply of said product from another store that can sell said product to

said store visited online by said purchaser.

[Claim 8] The product sales method according to claim 7, wherein there is further included a stock shortage product management step, in which stock shortage  
5 products, which are products that can be sold by a host store, but are out of stock at other stores from among said plurality of stores, are managed, and in the new shipment step, new shipment processing is executed to ship a new supply of said product from another store that  
10 can sell said product to said store visited online by said purchaser based on the information of said stock shortage products.

[Claim 9] A product sales program that enables products to be sold online by a plurality of stores based  
15 on a product catalog that comprises information on a plurality of products, the program enabling a computer to function as:

an unsellable product management unit that performs the management of unsellable products that can be sold  
20 at each store; and

an introduction unit that, when a product selected by a purchaser from said product catalog is one of said unsellable products that cannot be sold by said store visited online by said purchaser, introduces said  
25 purchaser to another store that can sell said product.



[Claim 10] A product sales program that enables products to be sold online by a plurality of stores based on a product catalog that comprises information on a plurality of products, the program enabling a computer  
5 to function as:

an unsellable product management unit that performs the management of unsellable products that cannot be sold at each store; and

a new shipment unit that, when a product selected  
10 by a purchaser from said product catalog is one of said unsellable products that cannot be sold by said store visited online by said purchaser, executes new shipment processing to ship a new supply of said product from another store that can sell said product to said store  
15 visited online by said purchaser.

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Field of the Invention]

The present invention relates to a product sales  
20 method and a product sales program that sell products online at a plurality of stores based on a product catalog formed from information on a plurality of products, and particularly to a product sales method and product sales program that increase the convenience for a purchaser and  
25 increase sales of products.

[0002]

[Prior Art]

Fig. 28 is a block diagram which shows the structure of a conventional product sales system. In Fig. 28, a product catalog server 10 is connected to a network 20. The product catalog server 10 provides a plurality of consumers on the network 20 with a product catalog, which is a collection of product release information from the respective manufacturers about a plurality of products, via a product catalog site 11.

[0003]

A product catalog information database 12 stores product catalog information consisting of the product identification number, product name, manufacturer name, manufacturer code, price, date on sale, and the like for the plurality of products making up the product catalog.

[0004]

Each one of store servers  $30_1$  to  $30_n$  is operated by stores A to N. Products advertised in the product catalog are sold to consumers via store sites  $31_1$  to  $31_n$ . The stores A to N are independent stores that do not belong to the same management organization and are partner stores in the product catalog site 11.

[0005]

A point that needs to be noted is that not all the

products advertised in the product catalog are always kept in stock in all of the stores A to N. Namely, the product catalog is created based on product release information provided by a plurality of manufacturers  
5 regardless of whether or not a particular store has dealings with a particular manufacturer.

[0006]

Therefore, a state in which a store has no stock of the product of a manufacturer with which the store has  
10 no dealings frequently arises. Because of this, a state arises in which a particular product can be sold by one store (because the product is held in stock), while the same product cannot be sold by another store (because the product is not held in stock).

15 [0007]

Each of the consumer clients  $40_1$  to  $40_m$  is connected to the network 200 and is located on the side of the m number of consumers. Each of the consumer clients  $40_1$  to  $40_m$  is used to purchase products online from any one of  
20 the stores A to N, via any one of the store sites  $31_1$  to  $31_n$  and the product catalog site 11.

[0008]

In the above described structure, if the consumer client  $40_1$  accesses the store server  $30_1$  (i.e., the store  
25 site  $31_1$ ), the store server  $30_1$  displays on the consumer

client 40<sub>1</sub>, the search menu screen 50 shown in Fig. 29. Here, if "product search" is clicked on the search menu screen 50, the store server 30<sub>1</sub> causes the link destination of the consumer client 40<sub>1</sub> to jump to the  
5 product catalog site 11.

[0009]

As a result, the product catalog server 10 displays the search screen 51 (a specific example of this is the search screen 59 shown in Fig. 30) on the consumer client  
10 40<sub>1</sub>. This search screen 51 is used to search a product catalog information database 12 (i.e., a product catalog) using the product name or the like as a search key. When a search button 52 is pressed after a search key has been input, the product catalog server 10 searches the product  
15 catalog information database 12 on the basis of the search key, and displays a search result screen 53 (a specific example of this is the search result screen 60 shown in Fig. 30) on the consumer client 40<sub>1</sub>.

[0010]

20 A list of products (product A, product B, and product C) is displayed as a result of the search on the search result screen 53. If a product being ordered is selected by the consumer from among the list of products, the product catalog server 10 displays an order screen  
25 54 (a specific example of which is the order screen 61

shown in Fig. 30) on the consumer client 40<sub>1</sub>. This order screen 54 is used to order selected products.

[0011]

When the order button 55 is pressed, the product  
5 catalog server 10 makes an enquiry to the store server  
30<sub>1</sub> as to whether or not the relevant product is kept in  
stock by the store A. If the product is kept in stock,  
a purchase screen 56 (a specific example of which is the  
purchase screen 62 shown in Fig. 30) is displayed on the  
10 consumer client 40<sub>1</sub>. The purchase screen 56 is used for  
the actual online purchase of the product.

[0012]

If the purchase button 57 is pressed, the product  
catalog server 10 notifies the store site 31<sub>1</sub> of the  
15 consumer information and information on the product being  
purchased. As a result, processing to receive payment  
of the purchase fee and processing to deliver the product  
are performed in the store A.

[0013]

20 If, however, the product ordered on the order screen  
54 is not kept in stock by the store A, the product catalog  
server displays a not in stock screen 58 (a specific  
example of which is the not in stock screen 63 shown in  
Fig. 30) that includes an apology for the fact that the  
25 product is not kept in stock on the consumer client 40<sub>1</sub>.

Consequently, after confirming that the product cannot be obtained from the store A, the consumer begins the search again so as to make the purchase by another route by accessing another store server.

5 [0014]

[Problems to be Solved by the Invention]

As has been described above, in a conventional product sales system, not all of the products corresponding to product catalog information database 12 shown in Fig. 28 can be sold by all of the stores A to N.

[0015]

Therefore, when a product is not held in stock at a particular store, even if the consumer goes ahead and makes an order on the order screen 54 shown in Fig. 29, the purchase cannot be made and the not in stock screen 58 is displayed. Therefore, the problems arise of many claims being made by purchasers and of this purchasing system not being convenient for purchasers.

20 [0016]

Because the store is also losing out on an excellent sales opportunity, this system is extremely disadvantageous from the viewpoint of a plurality of stores as it does nothing to promote increased product sales.

[0017]

The present invention has been achieved in order to solve the above problems. It is an object of this invention to provide a product sales method and a product sales program that increase the convenience for a purchaser and increase sales of products.

[0018]

[Means to Solve the Problems]

In order to achieve the above objects, according to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a product sales method in which products are sold online by a plurality of stores based on a product catalog that comprises information on a plurality of products, comprising: an unsellable product management step in which the management of unsellable products that cannot be sold is performed at each store; and an introduction step in which, when a product selected by a purchaser from the product catalog is one of the unsellable products that cannot be sold by the store visited online by the purchaser, the purchaser is introduced to another store that can sell the product.

[0019]

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a product sales program that enables products to be sold online by a plurality of

stores based on a product catalog that comprises  
information on a plurality of products, the program  
enabling a computer to function as: an unsellable product  
management unit that performs the management of  
5 unsellable products that cannot be sold at each store;  
and an introduction unit that, when a product selected  
by a purchaser from the product catalog is one of the  
unsellable products that cannot be sold by the store  
visited online by the purchaser, introduces the purchaser  
10 to another store that can sell the product.

[0020]

According to the above aspect, when a product  
selected by a purchaser from a product catalog cannot be  
sold by the store visited online by the purchaser, the  
15 purchaser is introduced to another store that can sell  
the product. Therefore, it is possible to avoid a  
situation in which a product cannot be purchased because  
it is not kept in stock even though the purchaser has  
actually tried to purchase the product, as is the instance  
20 in a conventional system, and the convenience for the  
purchaser is increased and sales opportunities for the  
stores are increased thereby creating an active  
marketplace.

[0021]

25 According to still another aspect of the present



invention, there is provided a product sales method in which products are sold online by a plurality of stores based on a product catalog that comprises information on a plurality of products, comprising: an unsellable  
5 product management step in which the management of unsellable products that cannot be sold is performed at each store; and a new shipment step in which, when a product selected by a purchaser from the product catalog is one of the unsellable products that cannot be sold by  
10 the store visited online by the purchaser, new shipment processing is executed to ship a new supply of the product from another store that can sell the product to the store visited online by the purchaser.

[0022]

15 According to still another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a product sales program that enables products to be sold online by a plurality of stores based on a product catalog that comprises information on a plurality of products, the program  
20 enabling a computer to function as: an unsellable product management unit that performs the management of unsellable products that cannot be sold at each store; and a new shipment unit that, when a product selected by a purchaser from the product catalog is one of the  
25 unsellable products that cannot be sold by the store

visited online by the purchaser, executes new shipment processing to ship a new supply of the product from another store that can sell the product to v store visited online by the purchaser.

5 [0023]

According to the above aspect, when a product selected by a purchaser from a product catalog cannot be sold by the store visited online by the purchaser, new shipment processing to ship a new supply of the product from the other store that does have the product in stock to the store that does not have the product in stock is executed. Therefore, it is possible to avoid a situation in which a product cannot be purchased because it is not kept in stock even though the purchaser has actually tried to purchase the product, as is the instance in a conventional system, and the convenience for the purchaser is increased and sales opportunities for the stores are increased thereby creating an active marketplace.

20 [0024]

[Embodiments of the Invention]

The one embodiment of the product sales method and product sales program of the present invention will now be described in detail with reference to the drawings.

25 [0025]

Fig. 1 is a block diagram which shows the structure of the one embodiment of the present invention. In this diagram, a product catalog server 100 is connected to a network 200. The product catalog server 100 provides a plurality of consumers on the network 200 with a product catalog, which is a collection of product release information from the respective manufacturers about a plurality of products, via a product catalog site 110. The product catalog server 100 also manages store information, consumer information, product catalog information, unsellable product information, stock shortage product information, and introduction information, which are described below.

[0026]

15 In the product catalog server 100, a communication interface 101 controls communication between the product catalog server 100 and outside devices via the network 200 in accordance with a predetermined communication protocol. A control section 102 controls each section. 20 The operation of this control section 102 is described in detail below. A Web screen creation section 103 creates the various types of screen described below. Memory 104 temporarily stores the various types of data.

[0027]

25 A store information database 120 stores store

information that relates to the stores A to N that sell products online using a product catalog. Specifically, as is shown in Fig. 2, the store information database 120 is provided with fields such as "store identification number", "store name", "order transmission destination URL (uniform resource locator)", and "other".

[0028]

The "store identification number" is used to identify the respective stores A to N. The "store name" is the name of the respective stores A to N. "Order transmission destination URL" is the URL used when transmitting order information and the like from the product catalog server 100 when a product is ordered by a consumer. "Other" is all other types of information. Here, the stores A to N are independent stores that do not belong to the same management organization and are partner stores in the product catalog site 110.

[0029]

Returning to Fig. 1, consumer information database 130 stores consumer information that relates to consumers who have been registered as members via the store site. Specifically, as is shown in Fig. 3, the consumer information database 130 is provided with fields such as "consumer identification number", store identification number", "authentication password", and "other".

[0030]

The "consumer identification number" is used to identify the consumer. The "store identification number" corresponds to the "store identification number" shown in Fig. 2 and is used to identify the store where the consumer performed the member registration. The "authentication password" is used to authenticate whether or not the consumer is a member. "Other" is all other types of information.

10 [0031]

Returning to Fig. 1, the product catalog information database 140 stores product catalog information consisting of the product identification number, product name, manufacturer name, manufacturer code, price, date on sale, and the like for the plurality of products making up the product catalog.

[0032]

Specifically, as is shown in Fig. 4, the product catalog information database 140 is provided with fields such as "product identification number", "product name", "manufacturer name", manufacturer code", "price", "date on sale", "product comment", "product genre", and "other".

[0033]

The "product identification number" is used to identify a product. The "product name" is the name of

25

the product. "Maker name" is the name of the manufacturer manufacturing the relevant product.

"Price" is the sale price of the product at the store.

"Date on sale" is the date the product went on sale.

5 "Product comment" contains comments about the product.

"Product genre" is the genre to which the product belongs.

"Other" is detailed information (e.g., song names, artist names, etc) on the product.

[0034]

10 A point that needs to be noted is that not all the products advertised in the product catalog are always kept in stock in all of the stores A to N. Accordingly, in the same way as in a conventional system, a state in which a store has no stock of the product of a manufacturer  
15 with which the store has no dealings frequently arises. However, in the one embodiment, as is described below, by introducing the consumer to another store or placing an order with the manufacturer when the product is not kept in stock by the first store, the consumer is provided  
20 with an opportunity to purchase the product by another method.

[0035]

Returning to Fig. 1, the unsellable product information database 150 stores unsellable product  
25 information that relates to products that cannot be sold

(because they are not kept in stock) by the host store from among the plurality of products advertised in the product catalog for each of the stores A to N.

[0036]

5           Specifically, as is shown in Fig. 5, the unsellable product information database 150 is provided with fields such as "product identification number", "registered store", and "date of registration". The "product identification number is used to identify products that  
10 cannot be sold by the relevant store. "Registered stores" are the name of those stores that can sell the product. "Date of registration" is the date the unsellable product information is registered in the unsellable product information database 150.

15           [0037]

Returning to Fig. 1, a stock shortage product information database 160 stores stock shortage product information that relates to a product of which there is a shortage of stock (referred to below as a stock shortage  
20 product). Shortage of stock refers to a state in each of the stores A to N in which the host store can sell the product (i.e. keeps the product in stock), while other stores cannot sell the product (i.e., do not keep the product in stock). However, there are cases, caused by  
25 differences in the times stock shortage product

information is registered in the stock shortage product information database 160, in which the same product can be sold by a plurality of stores.

[0038]

5           Specifically, as is shown in Fig. 6, the stock shortage product information database 160 is provided with fields such as "product identification number", "registered store", and "date of registration". The "product identification number" is used to identify a  
10 stock shortage product. "Registered stores" are the names of those stores that can sell a stock shortage product. "Date of registration" is the date when the stock shortage product information is registered in the stock shortage product information database 160.

15           [0039]

          Returning to Fig. 1, an introduction information database 170 stores introduction information that relates to the introduction when a consumer is introduced to another store that can sell a particular product and  
20 the product is purchased at the other store when the product cannot be sold (because it is not kept in stock) at the host store. Specifically, as is shown in Fig. 7, the introduction information database 170 is provided with fields such as "introduction source store  
25 identification number", "introduction destination store



identification number", "consumer identification number", and "date of introduction".

[0040]

The "introduction source store identification number" is the name of the store (i.e., the host store itself) that is introducing the consumer. "Introduction destination store identification number" is the name of the store (i.e., another store) to which the consumer is being introduced. "Consumer identification number" is used to identify the consumer being introduced. "Date of introduction" is the date the consumer is introduced.

[0041]

Returning to Fig. 1, the respective store servers 300<sub>1</sub> to 300<sub>n</sub> are operated by the stores A to N. Products advertised in the product catalog are sold to consumers via the store sites 310<sub>1</sub> to 310<sub>n</sub>. The stores A to N are partner stores in the product catalog site 110.

[0042]

In the product catalog server 300<sub>1</sub>, a communication interface 301<sub>1</sub> controls communication between the product catalog server 300<sub>1</sub> and outside devices via the network 200 in accordance with a predetermined communication protocol. A control section 302<sub>1</sub> controls each section. The operation of this control section 302<sub>1</sub> is described in detail below. A Web screen creation section 303<sub>1</sub>

creates the various types of screen described below.  
Memory 304<sub>1</sub> temporarily stores the various types of data.

[0043]

A host store sellable product information database  
5 320<sub>1</sub> stores host store sellable product information (e.g.,  
a product identification number which identifies the  
product, the date of registration, and the like) that  
relates to products that can be sold (i.e., that are kept  
in stock) by the host store itself (i.e., by the store  
10 A). A sales management information database 330<sub>1</sub> stores  
sales management information (consumer information,  
turnover information, and the like) in the store A.

[0044]

In the store server 300<sub>n</sub>, a communication interface  
15 301<sub>n</sub> controls communication between the store server 300<sub>n</sub>  
and outside devices via the network 200 in accordance with  
a predetermined communication protocol. A control  
section 302<sub>n</sub> controls each section. The operation of  
this control section 302<sub>n</sub> is described in detail below.  
20 A Web screen creation section 303<sub>n</sub> creates the various  
types of screen described below. Memory 304<sub>n</sub> temporarily  
stores the various types of data.

[0045]

A host store sellable product information database  
25 320<sub>n</sub> stores host store sellable product information (e.g.,

a product identification number which identifies the product, the date of registration, and the like) that relates to products that can be sold (i.e., that are kept in stock) by the host store itself (i.e., by the store  
5 N). A sales management information database 330<sub>n</sub> stores sales management information (consumer information, turnover information, and the like) in the store N.

[0046]

Each of the consumer clients 400<sub>1</sub> to 400<sub>m</sub> is  
10 connected to the network 200 and is located on the side of the m number of consumers. Each of the consumer clients 400<sub>1</sub> to 400<sub>m</sub> is used to purchase products online from any of the stores A to N, via one of the store sites 310<sub>1</sub> to 310<sub>n</sub> and the product catalog site 110.

15 [0047]

The operation of the one embodiment will now be described. The description is given with reference to the flow charts shown in Figs. 8 to 15 and the various screens shown in Figs. 16 to 26. Fig. 8 is a flow chart  
20 explaining the operation of the product catalog server 100 shown in Fig. 1. Fig. 14 is a flow chart explaining the operation of the store servers 300<sub>1</sub> to 300<sub>n</sub> shown in Fig. 1.

[0048]

25 At step SA1 shown in Fig. 8, the control section 102

of the product catalog server 100 determines whether or not a registration request to register unsellable product information and stock shortage product information in the unsellable product information database 150 and the stock  
5 shortage product information database 160 has been made from any of the store servers  $330_1$  to  $300_n$ . In this case, the result of the determination will be taken as NO.

[0049]

At step SA2, the control section 102 determines  
10 whether or not a registration request to register consumer information in the consumer information database 130 has been made from any of the store servers  $300_1$  to  $300_n$ . In this case, the result of the determination will be taken as NO.

15 [0050]

At step SA3, the control section 102 determines whether or not a jump request to jump from a store site (described below) to the product catalog site 110 has been made from any of the store servers  $300_1$  to  $300_n$ . In this  
20 case, the result of the determination will be taken as NO. Thereafter, the control section 102 repeats the determinations of steps SA1 to SA3.

[0051]

At step SG1 shown in Fig. 14, the control section  
25  $302_1$  of the store server  $300_1$  determines whether or not

a registration trigger to register unsellable product information and stock shortage product information in the unsellable product information database 150 and the stock shortage product information database 160 is present.

5 In this case, the result of the determination will be taken as NO. Examples of this registration trigger include those based on an instruction from an operator and those based on timer settings.

[0052]

10 At step SG2, the control section 302<sub>1</sub> determines whether or not a new registration access relating to the member registration of a consumer has been made from any of the consumer clients 400<sub>1</sub> to 400<sub>m</sub>. In this case, the result of the determination will be taken as NO.

15 [0053]

At step SG3, the control section 302<sub>1</sub> determines whether or not a purchase access has been made from any of the consumer clients 400<sub>1</sub> to 400<sub>m</sub> in order to purchase a product via the store site 310<sub>1</sub> and the product catalog  
20 site 110. In this case, the result of the determination will be taken as NO. Thereafter, the control section 302<sub>1</sub> repeats the determinations of steps SG1 to SG3. Note that the other store servers 300<sub>2</sub> (not shown) to 300<sub>n</sub> perform the same operations as the above described store  
25 server 300<sub>1</sub>.

[0054]

If a registration trigger to register unsellable product information and stock shortage product information is present due to an instruction from an operator of the store A, the result of the determination by the control section 302<sub>1</sub> of the store server 300<sub>1</sub> at step SG1 is YES. At step SG9, the control section 302<sub>1</sub> sends a registration request to the product catalog server 100.

10 [0055]

As a result, the result of the determination at step SA1 in Fig. 8 by the control section 102 of the product catalog server 100 is YES. At step SA8, the control section 102 performs unsellable product information and stock shortage information registration processing to register unsellable product information and stock shortage information relating to store A in the unsellable product information database 150 and the stock shortage information database 160.

20 [0056]

Specifically, at step SB1 shown in Fig. 9, the control section 102 refers to the unsellable product information database 150 shown in Fig. 5. At step SB2, the control section 102 determines whether or not any product not registered by the host store is among the

products that have been registered in the unsellable product information database 150 by other stores (referred to below as "other store unsellable products"). If the result of this determination is NO, the processing  
5 returns to the main routine shown in Fig. 8.

[0057]

If, however, the result of the determination at step SB2 is YES, then, at step SB3, the control section 102 acquires product names relating to the other store  
10 unsellable products from the product catalog information database 140 using the product identification numbers (i.e., the unsellable product information database 150 (see Fig. 5)) corresponding to the other store unsellable products as a key.

15 [0058]

The control section 102 displays the other store unsellable product list screen 500 shown in Fig. 16 on the display (not shown) of the store server 300<sub>1</sub> based on the acquired product names. The other store unsellable  
20 product list screen 500 is a screen which shows a list of products that other stores cannot sell and is used to check whether or not an other store unsellable product is kept in stock by the host store itself (in this case, the store A). At step SB4, the control section 102  
25 determines whether or not a register button 501 has been

pressed. In this case, the result of the determination will be taken as NO, and the same determination is repeated.

[0059]

5           When the other store unsellable product list screen 500 is displayed, at step SG10, shown in Fig. 14, the operator of the store A performs the registration processing. Specifically, the operator checks the existence of stock and absence of stock on the other store  
10   unsellable product list screen 500 (see Fig. 16) while referring to the host store sellable product information database 320<sub>1</sub>. The operator then presses the register button 501. In the one embodiment, it is also possible for the check to be performed automatically by the control  
15   section 302<sub>1</sub>.

[0060]

          When the register button 501 is pressed, the result of the determination at step SB4 shown in Fig. 9 by the control section 102 of the product catalog server 100 is  
20   YES. At step SB5, the control section 102 links stock shortage product information relating to products that have been checked as being in stock on the other store unsellable product list screen 500 shown in Fig. 16 to the store A, and registers this stock shortage product  
25   information in the stock shortage product information



database 160 (see Fig. 6).

[0061]

At step SB6, the control section 102 links  
unsellable product information relating to products that  
5 have been checked as not being in stock on the other store  
unsellable product list screen 500 shown in Fig. 16 to  
the store A, and registers this unsellable product  
information in the unsellable product information  
database 150 (see Fig. 5).

10 [0062]

If, for example, a new registration access is made  
from the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub> to the store server 300<sub>1</sub>,  
the result of the determination at step SG2 shown in Fig.  
14 by the control section 302<sub>1</sub> of the store server 300<sub>1</sub>  
15 is YES. At step SG11, the control section 302<sub>1</sub> performs  
consumer information registration processing to register  
the consumer information of the consumer who corresponds  
to the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub> in the consumer information  
database 130.

20 [0063]

Specifically, at step SH1 shown in Fig. 15, the  
control section 302<sub>1</sub> executes consumer information input  
processing to receive the input of consumer information  
(authentication password, name, address, and the like)  
25 by the consumer using a consumer information input screen

(not shown). At step SH2, the control section 302<sub>1</sub> issues a consumer identification number to the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>. At step SH3, the control section 302<sub>1</sub> sends a registration request to the product catalog server 100  
5 to register the consumer information with the store identification number added thereto and also stores the consumer information in the sales management information database 330<sub>1</sub>.

[0064]

10 As a result, the result of the determination by the control section 102 of the product catalog server 100 at step SA2 shown in Fig. 8 is YES. At step SA9, the control section 102 registers the consumer information in the consumer information database 130 (see Fig. 3).

15 [0065]

If, for example, a purchase access is made to the store server 300<sub>1</sub> from the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>, the result of the determination by the control section 302<sub>1</sub> of the store server 300<sub>1</sub> at step SG3 shown in Fig. 14 is  
20 YES. At step SG4, the control section 302<sub>1</sub> displays the search menu screen 600 shown in Fig. 17 on the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>.

[0066]

At step SG5, the control section 302<sub>1</sub> determines  
25 whether or not a search link 601 ("product search") in

the search menu screen 600 has been clicked. In this case,  
if the result of the determination is NO, the same  
determination is repeated. If the search link 601 is  
clicked by a consumer, the result of the determination  
5 by the control section 302<sub>1</sub> at step SG5 is YES.

[0067]

At step SG6, the control section 302<sub>1</sub> sends a jump  
request to the product catalog server 100 to jump from  
the store site 310<sub>1</sub> (i.e., from the search menu screen 600:  
10 see Fig. 17) to the product catalog site 110 (i.e., to  
the search screen 700: see Fig. 18). At step SG7, the  
control section 302<sub>1</sub> determines whether or not product  
information which verifies whether a product can be sold  
(described below) and a consumer identification number  
15 have been received from the product catalog server 100.  
In this case, the result of the determination will be  
taken as NO.

[0068]

At step SG8, the control section 302<sub>1</sub> determines  
20 whether or not product information which sells a product  
(described below) and a consumer identification number  
have been received. In this case the result of the  
determination will be taken as NO. Thereafter, the  
control section 302<sub>1</sub> repeats the determinations of steps  
25 SG7 and SG8.

[0069]

When a jump request is made at step SG6, the result of the determination at step SA3 of Fig. 8 by the control section 102 of the product catalog server 100 is YES. At  
5 step SA4, the control section 102 displays an authentication screen (not shown) on the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>, and then receives the input of the consumer identification number and password using this authentication screen.

10 [0070]

At step SA5, after the control section 102 has authenticated the consumer by referring to the consumer information database (see Fig. 3) using the input consumer identification number and password as a key, it  
15 determines whether or not the result of the determination is OK. If the result of this determination is NO, the control section 102 performs the processing of step SA1 and thereafter.

[0071]

20 If the result of the processing at step SA5 is YES, then, at step SA6, the control section executes product purchase processing. Specifically, at step SC1 shown in Fig. 10, the control section 102 displays the search screen 700 shown in Fig. 18 on the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>.  
25 The search screen 700 is used to search the product

catalog information database 140 (see Fig. 4) using a title, artist name, and the like as a key.

[0072]

At step SC2, after a search key has been input, the control section 102 determines whether or not a search button 701 (see Fig. 18) has been pressed. If the result of the determination is NO, the same determination is repeated. After the search key has been input by the consumer, when the search button 701 is pressed, the result of the determination at step SC2 by the control section 102 is YES. At step SC3, the control section 102 searches the product catalog information database 140 (see Fig. 4).

[0073]

At step SC4, the control section 102 displays the search result screen 800 shown in Fig. 19 on the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>. A list of products is displayed on the search result screen 800 as the result of the search. At step SC5, the control section 102 determines whether or not a product to be ordered has been selected from this product list by the consumer. If the result of the determination is NO, the same determination is repeated.

[0074]

When a product 801 to be ordered is selected by the consumer from the product list, the result of the

determination at step SC5 by the control section 102 is YES. At step SC6, after the control section 102 has acquired product information (product identification number, product name, and the like) corresponding to the  
5 selected product 801 from the product catalog information database 140 (see Fig. 4), the control section 102 sends the product information and the consumer identification number to the store site 300<sub>1</sub> for verification as to whether or not this product can be sold.

10 [0075]

At step SC7, the control section 102 determines whether or not the information on whether the product can be sold has been received by the store server 300<sub>1</sub>. If the result of the determination is NO, the same  
15 determination is repeated.

[0076]

When the product information which confirms whether the product can be sold and the consumer identification number have been received by the store server 300<sub>1</sub>, the  
20 result of the determination at step SG7 shown in Fig. 14 by the control section 302<sub>1</sub> of the store server 300<sub>1</sub> is YES.

[0077]

At step SG12, the control section 302<sub>1</sub> determines  
25 whether or not the product can be sold (i.e., whether or

not the product is kept in stock) by its own host store  
(i.e., the store A) by referring to the host store  
sellable product information database 320<sub>1</sub> using the  
product information as a key. Note that the consumer  
5 identification number may be used to collate between the  
particular consumer and a blacklist managed  
independently by the store A. At step SG13, the control  
section 302<sub>1</sub> sends the information as to whether the  
product can be sold that corresponds to the determination  
10 at step SG12 to the product catalog server 100.

[0078]

When the information as to whether the product can  
be sold is received by the product catalog server 100,  
the result of the determination at step SC7 shown in Fig.  
15 10 by the control section 102 of the product catalog  
server 100 is YES. At step SC8, the control section 102  
determines whether or not the product can be sold by the  
store A based on the information as to whether the product  
can be sold.

20 [0079]

When the result of the determination at step SC8 is  
YES, then, at step SC14, the control section 102 executes  
the relevant store order processing. Specifically, at  
step SD1 shown in Fig. 11, the control section 102  
25 displays a same store order screen 900, which is shown

in Fig. 20, on the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>. This same store order screen 900 is used to receive an order for the product 801 (see Fig. 19) at the store A. In addition, detailed information on the product 801 is displayed on  
5 the same store order screen 900.

[0080]

At step SD2, the control section 102 determines whether or not the same store order button 901 of the same store order screen 900 has been pressed. If the result  
10 of the determination is NO, the same determination is repeated. When the same store order button 901 is pressed by the consumer, the result of the determination of step SD2 by the control section 102 is YES.

[0081]

15 At step SD3, the control section 102 displays a host store purchase screen 1000, which is shown in Fig. 21, on the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>. The host store purchase screen 1000 is used to purchase the product 801 (see Fig. 19) at the host store (i.e., the store A). A shopping  
20 basket, total cost, and a purchase button 1001 are displayed on the host store purchase screen 1000.

[0082]

At step SD4, the control section 102 determines whether or not the purchase button 1001 has been pressed.  
25 If the result of the determination is NO, the same



determination is repeated. When the purchase button 1001 is pressed by the consumer, the result of the determination of step SD4 by the control section 102 is YES.

5           [0083]

At step SD5, the control section 102 displays a delivery information input screen 1100, which is shown in Fig. 22, on the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>. The delivery information input screen 1100 is used to receive the input  
10 by the consumer of delivery information (delivery address, telephone number, etc.) for the product 801 (see Fig. 19).

[0084]

At step SD6, the control section determines whether or not the delivery information has been input. If the  
15 result of the determination is NO, the same determination is repeated. When the delivery destination information is input by the consumer, the result of the determination of step SD6 by the control section 102 is YES.

[0085]

20           At step SD7, the control section 102 acquires product information (product identification number, product name, delivery information and the like) for the product 801 being purchased (see Fig. 19) from the product catalog information database (see Fig. 4). Thereafter,  
25 this product information and consumer identification

number are sent to the store server 300<sub>1</sub> to be used for the sale.

[0086]

When the product information and consumer  
5 identification number for the sale are received in the  
store server 300<sub>1</sub>, the result of the determination at step  
SG8 shown in Fig. 14 by the control section 302<sub>1</sub> of the  
store server 300<sub>1</sub> is YES. At step SG14, after the control  
section 302<sub>1</sub> has executed sale processing (delivery,  
10 receipt of payment, and the like) in order to sell the  
product 801 (see Fig. 19) to the consumer based on the  
product information and consumer identification number,  
the determinations of steps SG1 and thereafter are  
performed.

15 [0087]

If, however, the result of the determination at step  
SC8 shown in Fig. 10 is NO, namely, if the product 801  
(see Fig. 19) cannot be sold by the store A (i.e., because  
it is not kept in stock), then, at step SC9, the control  
20 section 102 of the product catalog server 100 refers to  
the stock shortage product information database 160 (see  
Fig. 6) using the product identification number for the  
product 801 as a key. Namely, at step SC9, it is  
confirmed whether or not the product 801 can be sold at  
25 a store other than the store A.

[0088]

At step SC10, the control section 102 determines whether or not the ordered product 801 is in the stock shortage product database 160. If the result of this  
5 determination is NO, namely, if the product 801 cannot be sold by any of the stores, then, at step SC15, the control section 102 displays an out of stock screen (not shown) providing a message to the fact that the product is out of stock on the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>.

10 [0089]

At step SC16, the control section 102 links unsellable product information relating to the product 801 (see Fig. 19) to the store A, and registers this unsellable product information in the unsellable product  
15 information database 150 (see Fig. 5).

[0090]

If, however, the result of the determination at step SC10 is YES, namely, if it is possible for the product 801 (see Fig. 19) to be sold at a store other than the  
20 store A, then, at step SC11, the control section 102 deletes the stock shortage product information corresponding to the product 801 from the stock shortage product information database 160 (see Fig. 6). At step SC12, the control section 102 registers unsellable  
25 product information relating to the product 801 in the

unsellable product information database 150 (see Fig. 5)  
for the store A.

[0091]

At step SC13, the control section 102 executes  
5 manufacturer order/ other store order processing to  
either order the product 801 from the manufacturer or to  
order the product 801 from a store other than the store  
A. Specifically, at step SE1 shown in Fig. 12, the  
control section 102 displays a manufacturer order/ other  
10 store order selection screen 1200, which is shown in Fig.  
23, on the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>.

[0092]

The manufacturer order/ other store order selection  
screen 1200 is used to have a consumer select whether the  
15 consumer wishes to order the product 801 (which is not  
in stock in store A) at another store that does have the  
product in stock or to order the product 801 directly from  
the manufacturer. A message to the fact that the product  
801 (see Fig. 19) is out of stock and cannot be sold by  
20 the store A, detailed information about the product 801,  
an other store order button 1201 which orders from another  
store, and a manufacturer order button 1202 which orders  
from the manufacturer.

[0093]

25 At step SE2, the control section 102 determines

whether or not the other store order button 1201 or the manufacturer order button 1202 has been pressed. Here, if the other store order button 1201 is pressed, at step SE4, the control section 102 acquires registered store  
5 information (information on other stores) that can sell the product 801 from the stock shortage product information database 160 (see Fig. 6).

[0094]

At step SE5, the control section 102 displays a  
10 store list screen 1300, which is shown in Fig. 24, on the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>, based on the registered store information acquired at step SE4. A list of stores (store B and store N in Fig. 24) that can sell the product 801, which cannot be sold by store A, is displayed on the  
15 store list screen 1300.

[0095]

At step SE6, the control section 102 determines whether or not a store which places the order has been selected by the consumer from the list of stores on the  
20 store list screen 1300. If the result of the determination is NO, the same determination is repeated. If the store N is selected by the consumer from the store list screen 1300, the result of the determination at step SE6 by the control section 102 is YES. Namely, in this  
25 case, the consumer has been introduced to the store N by

the store A.

[0096]

At step SE7, the control section 102 registers the introduction information relating to the introduction in the introduction information database 170 shown in Fig. 5 7. In this case, the introduction information consists of an introduction source store identification number corresponding to the store A, an introduction destination store identification number corresponding to the store 10 N, a consumer identification number corresponding to the consumer ordering the product 801, and the data of the introduction.

[0097]

At step SE8, the control section 102 displays an 15 other store purchase screen 1400, which is shown in Fig. 25, on the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>. The other store purchase screen 1400 is used to purchase the product 801 (see Fig. 19) at the other store (i.e., the store N) that is being introduced (i.e., the destination of the introduction). 20 A shopping basket, the total cost, and a purchase button 1401 are displayed on the other store purchase screen 1400.

[0098]

At step SE9, the control section 102 determines whether or not the purchase button 1401 has been pressed. 25 If the result of the determination is NO, the same

determination is repeated. When the purchase button 1401 is pressed by the consumer, the result of the determination at step SE9 by the control section 102 is YES.

5           [0099]

At step SE10, the control section 102 displays a delivery information input screen 1100, which is shown in Fig. 22, on the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>. At step SE11, the control section 102 determines whether or not the  
10 delivery information has been input. If the result of the determination is NO, the same determination is repeated. When the delivery information has been input by the consumer, the result of the determination at step SE10 by the control section 102 is YES.

15           [0100]

At step SE12, after the control section 102 has acquired product information (i.e., product identification number, product name, delivery information, and the like) corresponding to the product  
20 801 (see Fig. 19) being purchased from the product catalog information database 140 (see Fig. 4), the control section 102 sends this product information and the consumer identification number to the store server 300<sub>n</sub> of the introduction destination to be used for the sale.

25           [0101]

When the product information and the consumer identification number for the sale are received by the store server 300<sub>n</sub>, the result of the determination at step SG8 shown in Fig. 14 by the control section 302<sub>n</sub> of the store server 300<sub>n</sub> is YES. At step SG14, based on the product information and the consumer identification number, the control section 302<sub>n</sub> executes sale processing (delivery, payment receipt, and the like) to sell the product 801 (see Fig. 19) to the consumer. The determinations of step SG1 and thereafter are then repeated.

[0102]

If, however, the manufacturer order button 1202 shown in Fig. 23 is pressed, then, at step SE3 shown in Fig. 12, the control section 102 executes manufacturer order processing to order the product 801 (see Fig. 19) directly from the manufacturer. Specifically, the control section 102 sends product information corresponding to the product 801 being ordered from the manufacturer as well as consumer information to the store server 300<sub>1</sub> corresponding to the store A.

[0103]

As a result, the store server 300<sub>1</sub> sends detailed information on the order from the manufacturer (delivery date and the like) to the consumer client 400<sub>1</sub>, and also



sends order information to an unillustrated manufacturer server.

[0104]

Note that, in the one embodiment, instead of the  
5 manufacturer order/ other store order selection screen  
1200 shown in Fig. 23, it is also possible for only the  
other store order to be received using the other store  
order screen 1500 shown in Fig. 26. If the other store  
order button 1501 of this other store order screen 1500  
10 is pressed, the processing of step SE4 shown in Fig. 12  
and thereafter is executed.

[0105]

At step SA7 shown in Fig. 8, the control section 102  
of the product catalog server 100 determines whether or  
15 not a trigger (for example, an instruction from an  
operator) is present to trigger the processing of payment  
of an introduction fee that is paid by the introduction  
destination to the introduction source as a result of the  
above described introduction. If the result of the  
20 determination is NO, the determinations of step SA1 and  
thereafter are repeated.

[0106]

If the result of the determination at step SA7 is  
YES, then, at step SA10, the control section 102 executes  
25 the introduction fee payment processing. Specifically,

at step SF1 shown in Fig. 13, the control section 102 acquires introduction information from the introduction information database 170 (see Fig. 7).

[0107]

5           At step SF2, the control section 102 calculates the introduction fee to be received from the store that is the introduction destination by each of the stores that are the introduction sources. Examples of the introduction fee include a set fee for each introduction and an introduction fee that increases in proportion to  
10           the number of introductions. At step SF3, the control section 102 requests payment of the introduction fee calculated at step SF2 to each introduction destination store via electronic mail or the like.

15           [0108]

          At step SF4, the control section 102 receives as a temporary deposit the introduction fee from each introduction destination store via electronic settlement or the like. At step SF5, the control section 102  
20           distributes the introduction fee to each introduction source store by electronic settlement or the like.

[0109]

[Effects due to the Invention]

          As has been described above, according to the one  
25           embodiment, when a product selected by a purchaser from

the product catalog information database 140 cannot be sold by the store (for example, the store A) visited online by the purchaser, the purchaser is introduced to another store (for example, the store N) that can sell  
5 the product. Therefore, it is possible to avoid a situation in which a product cannot be purchased because it is not kept in stock even though the purchaser has actually tried to purchase the product, as is the instance in a conventional system. Moreover, the convenience for  
10 the purchaser is increased and sales opportunities for the stores are increased thereby creating an active marketplace.

[0110]

According to the one embodiment, because the fact  
15 that a purchaser has, at the least, selected a product from the product catalog information database 140 is used as a trigger for the unsellable product information database 150 and the stock shortage product information database 160 to be updated, maintenance of the unsellable  
20 product information database 150 and the stock shortage product information database 160 can be carried out with ease without causing any trouble to the operator.

[0111]

According to the one embodiment, because an  
25 introduction fee is paid to the store making the

introduction from the store that is being introduced, as was explained in reference to Fig. 13, cooperation between stores is strengthened, which creates an even more active and healthy marketplace.

5 [0112]

According to the one embodiment, as is shown in Fig. 23, because either placing an order with the manufacturer or placing an order with another store is selected when the product selected by the purchaser from the product  
10 catalog (i.e., the product catalog information database 140) is unavailable for sale from the store visited by the purchaser online, the purchaser can be provided with a plurality of purchasing methods and the convenience for the purchaser thus increased even further.

15 [0113]

A detailed description is given above of a one embodiment of the present invention with reference made to the drawings, however, it is to be understood that the specific structure thereof is not limited to that given  
20 in the one embodiment, and various design modifications are possible insofar as they do not depart from the intent and purpose of the present invention.

[0114]

For example, in the above described one embodiment,  
25 a program which performs the functions of the product

catalog server 100, the stores servers  $300_1$  to  $300_n$ , or the consumer clients  $400_1$  to  $400_m$  may be recorded on a computer readable recording medium 1700, which is shown in Fig. 27. The above functions are then performed by  
5 the program recorded on this recording medium 1700 being read by a computer 1600, which is shown in Fig. 27, and then executed.

[0115]

The computer 1600 is formed by a central processing  
10 unit (CPU) 1610 which executes the program, an input device such as a keyboard or mouse, read only memory (ROM) 1630 which stores various types of data, random access memory (RAM) 1640 which stores calculation parameters and the like, a reading device 1650 which reads a program from  
15 the recording medium 1700, a display unit, an output device 1660 such as a printer, and a bus 1670 which connects the respective device sections.

[0116]

After reading the program recorded on the recording  
20 medium 1700 via the reading device 1650, the CPU 1610 executes the program so as to perform the functions. It is to be understood that portable recording devices such as optical disc flexible discs, and hard discs are included in the term "recording medium 1700" and, in  
25 addition, transmission mediums that temporarily record

and hold data such as networks are also included.

[0117]

In the one embodiment, when a product is out of stock at the store A, it is possible for a new supply of the product to be received by the store A through the agency of the product catalog server 100 from the store N, which does have the product in stock. The product can then be sold via the store site 310<sub>1</sub> of the store A.

[0118]

In this case also, it is possible to avoid a situation in which a product cannot be purchased because it is not kept in stock even though the purchaser has actually tried to purchase the product, as is the instance in a conventional system. Moreover, the convenience for the purchaser is increased and sales opportunities for the stores are increased thereby creating an active marketplace.

[0119]

As has been described above, according to one aspect of the present invention, when a product selected by a purchaser from a product catalog cannot be sold by the store visited online by the purchaser, the purchaser is introduced to another store that can sell the product. Therefore, the effects are achieved that it is possible to avoid a situation in which a product cannot be

purchased because it is not kept in stock even though the purchaser has actually tried to purchase the product, as is the instance in a conventional system, and the convenience for the purchaser is increased and sales opportunities for the stores are increased thereby creating an active marketplace.

[0120]

According to another aspect of the present invention, because the fact that a purchaser has, at the least, selected a product from a product catalog is used as a trigger for the management information on the unsellable product to be updated, the effect is achieved that maintenance of the management information on the unsellable product can be carried out with ease without causing any trouble to the operator.

[0121]

According to still another aspect of the present invention, because stock shortage products, which are products that can be sold by the host store, but are out of stock at the others of a plurality of stores, are managed, and a purchaser is introduced to another store that can sell the product based on the information of the stock shortage products, the effects are achieved that it is possible to avoid a situation in which a product cannot be purchased because it is not kept in stock even

though the purchaser has actually tried to purchase the product, as is the instance in a conventional system, and the convenience for the purchaser is increased and sales opportunities for the stores are increased thereby  
5 creating an active marketplace.

[0122]

According to still another aspect of the present invention, because the fact that a purchaser has, at the least, selected a product from a product catalog is used  
10 as a trigger for the management information on the stock shortage product to be updated, the effect is achieved that maintenance of the management information on the stock shortage product can be carried out with ease without causing any trouble to the operator.

15 [0123]

According to still another aspect of the present invention, because an introduction fee is paid to the store making the introduction from the store that is being introduced, the effect is achieved that cooperation  
20 between stores is strengthened and an even more active and healthy marketplace is created.

[0124]

According to still another aspect of the present invention, because either an introduction step or a step  
25 to place an order with the manufacturer is selected when



the product selected by the purchaser from the product catalog is unavailable for sale from the store visited by the purchaser online, the effect is achieved that the purchaser can be provided with a plurality of purchasing methods and the convenience for the purchaser is thus increased even further.

[0125]

According to still another aspect of the present invention, when a product selected by a purchaser from a product catalog cannot be sold by the store visited online by the purchaser, new shipment processing to ship a new supply of the product from the other store that does have the product in stock to the store that does not have the product in stock is executed. Therefore, the effects are achieved that it is possible to avoid a situation in which a product cannot be purchased because it is not kept in stock even though the purchaser has actually tried to purchase the product, as is the instance in a conventional system, and the convenience for the purchaser is increased and sales opportunities for the stores are increased thereby creating an active marketplace.

[0126]

According to still another aspect of the present invention, because stock shortage products, which are products that can be sold by the host store, but are out

of stock at the others of a plurality of stores, are managed, and a new supply of the product is shipped from the other store that does have the product in stock to the store that does not have the product in stock based on the information of the stock shortage products, the effects are achieved that it is possible to avoid a situation in which a product cannot be purchased because it is not kept in stock even though the purchaser has actually tried to purchase the product, as is the instance in a conventional system, and the convenience for the purchaser is increased and sales opportunities for the stores are increased thereby creating an active marketplace.

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

15 [Fig. 1]

A block diagram which shows the structure of the one embodiment of the present invention.

[Fig. 2]

A view which shows the table structure of the store information database 120 shown in Fig. 1.

[Fig. 3]

A view which shows the table structure of the consumer information database 130 shown in Fig. 1.

[Fig. 4]

25 A view which shows the table structure of the

product catalog information database 140 shown in Fig.  
1.

[Fig. 5]

A view which shows the table structure of the  
5 unsellable product information database 150 shown in Fig.  
1.

[Fig. 6]

A view which shows the table structure of the stock  
shortage product information database 160 shown in Fig.  
10 1.

[Fig. 7]

A view which shows the table structure of the  
introduction information database 170 shown in Fig. 1.

[Fig. 8]

15 A flow chart which explains the operation of the  
product catalog server 100 shown in Fig. 1.

[Fig. 9]

A flow chart which explains the unsellable product  
information and stock shortage product information  
20 registration processing shown in Fig. 8.

[Fig. 10]

A flow chart which explains the product purchase  
processing shown in Fig. 8.

[Fig. 11]

25 A flow chart which explains the order processing

from the host outlet shown in Fig. 10.

[Fig. 12]

A flow chart which explains the manufacturer order/  
other outlet order processing shown in Fig. 10.

5 [Fig. 13]

A flow chart which explains the introduction fee  
payment processing shown in Fig. 8.

[Fig. 14]

A flow chart which explains the operation of the  
10 store servers 300<sub>1</sub> to 300<sub>n</sub> shown in Fig. 1.

[Fig. 15]

A flow chart which explains consumer information  
registration processing shown in Fig. 14.

[Fig. 16]

15 A view which shows other outlet unsellable product  
list screen 500 according to the one embodiment.

[Fig. 17]

A view which shows the search menu screen 600 in the  
one embodiment.

20 [Fig. 18]

A view which shows the search screen 700 in the one  
embodiment.

[Fig. 19]

A view which shows the search result screen 800 in  
25 the one embodiment.

[Fig. 20]

A view which shows the screen 900 which orders from this outlet in the one embodiment.

[Fig. 21]

5 A view which shows the screen 1000 which orders from the host outlet in the one embodiment.

[Fig. 22]

A view which shows the delivery information input screen 1100 in the one embodiment.

10 [Fig. 23]

A view which shows the manufacturer order/ other outlet order selection screen 1200 in the one embodiment.

[Fig. 24]

15 A view which shows the store list screen 1300 in the one embodiment.

[Fig. 25]

A view which shows the other outlet purchase screen 1400 in the one embodiment.

[Fig. 26]

20 A view which shows the other outlet order screen 1500 in the one embodiment.

[Fig. 27]

A block diagram which shows the structure of a variant example of the one embodiment.

25 [Fig. 28]

A block diagram which shows the structure of a conventional product sales system.

[Fig. 29]

A view which shows the screen transitions in a  
5 conventional product sales system.

[Fig. 30]

A view which shows the screen transitions in a conventional product sales system.

[Description of Signs]

10	100	product catalog server
	110	product catalog site
	102	control section
	200	network
	300 <sub>1</sub> to 300 <sub>n</sub>	product catalog server
15	302 <sub>1</sub> to 302 <sub>n</sub>	control section
	310 <sub>1</sub> to 310 <sub>n</sub>	store site
	400 <sub>1</sub> to 400 <sub>m</sub>	consumer client

[Type of Document] Abstract

[Abstract]

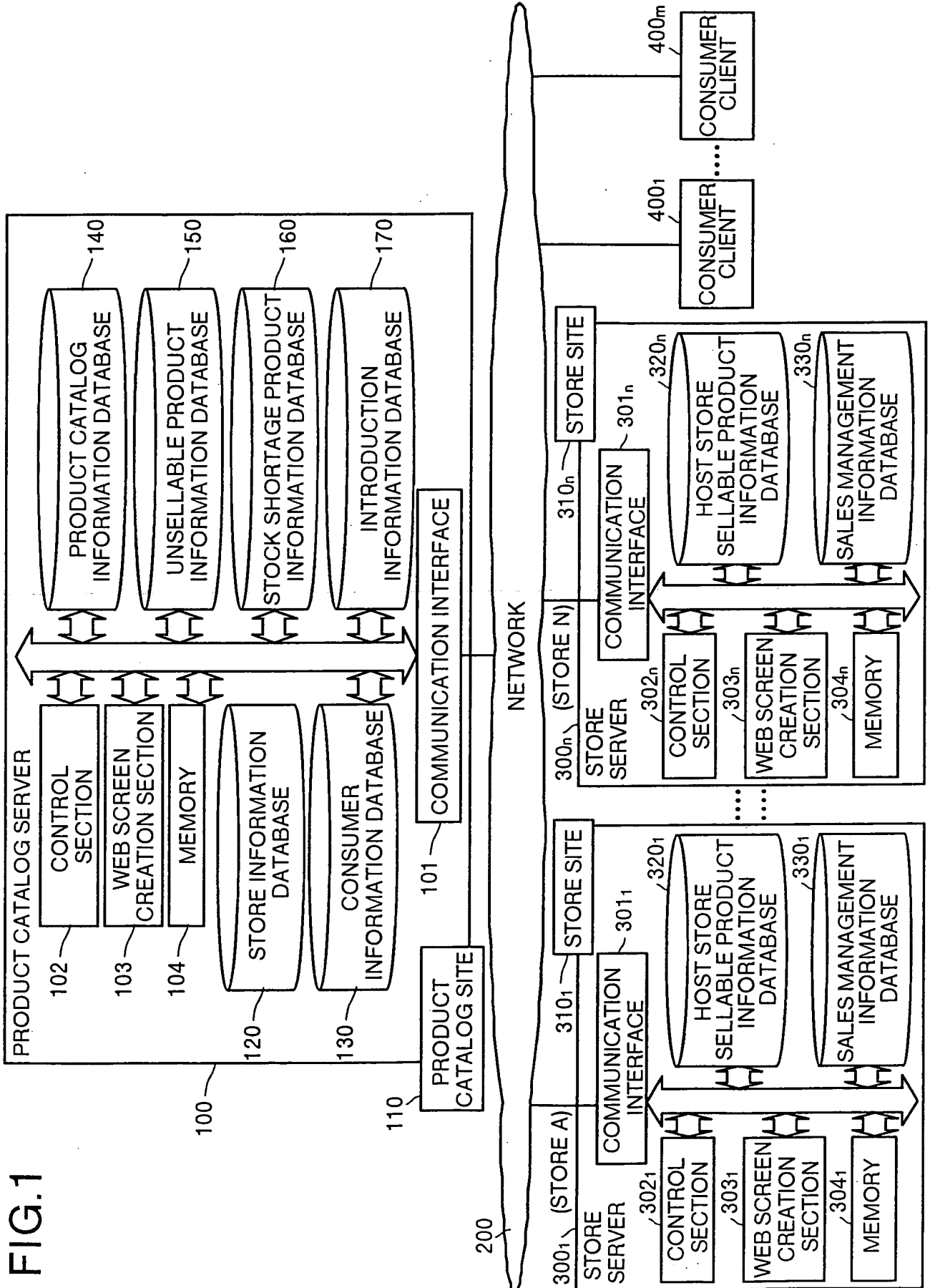
[Object] To increase the convenience for a purchaser and increase sales of products.

5 [Means] A control section of a product catalog server manages an unsellable product information database that relates to unsellable products that cannot be sold at each store. When a product selected by a purchaser from a product catalog information database cannot be sold by  
10 the store visited online by the purchaser, the purchaser is introduced to another store that can sell the product.

[Selected Figure] Fig. 1

A BLOCK DIAGRAM WHICH SHOWS THE STRUCTURE OF THE ONE EMBODIMENT OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

FIG.1







## FIG.2

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE TABLE STRUCTURE OF THE STORE INFORMATION DATABASE 120 SHOWN IN FIG. 1

120

STORE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	STORE NAME	ORDER TRANSMISSION DESTINATION URL	OTHER	
SHOP001	STORE A	https://shop/basket	.....	

## FIG.3

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE TABLE STRUCTURE OF THE CONSUMER INFORMATION DATABASE 130 SHOWN IN FIG. 1

130

CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	STORE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	AUTHENTICATION PASSWORD	OTHER	
USER00001	SHOP001	passwad	.....	



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## FIG.4

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE TABLE STRUCTURE OF THE PRODUCT CATALOG INFORMATION DATABASE 140 SHOWN IN FIG. 1

140

ITEM	EXAMPLE 1 (MUSIC CD)	EXAMPLE 2 (BOOK)	
PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	ESCB-2230	ISBN 4756137555	
PRODUCT NAME	The Great Escape-JUDY AND MAMY	THE DIGITAL TELEVISION WAR BETWEEN JAPAN AND AMERICA	
MAKER NAME	EPIC/SOMY	ISCI	
MAKER CODE	ESCB	ascii	
PRICE	2800	2800	
DATE OF SALE	2001/05/23	2001/05/20	
PRODUCT COMMENT	8 YEARS AFTER THEIR DEBUT, THE EVER POPULAR...	THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA BATTLE....	
PRODUCT GENRE	POP MUSIC FROM JAPAN	BUSINESS	
OTHER	SONG TITLE ARTIST NAME LABEL NAME RECORDING DATA TOTAL TIME MEDIA...	NUMBER OF PAGES AUTHOR CONTENTS TRANSLATOR	



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## FIG. 5

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE TABLE STRUCTURE OF THE UNSELLABLE  
PRODUCT INFORMATION DATABASE 150 SHOWN IN FIG. 1

150

PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	REGISTERED STORE	DATE OF REGISTRATION	
0000000001	STORE A	2001/05/23	
0000000002	STORE B	2001/05/24	

## FIG.6

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE TABLE STRUCTURE OF THE STOCK SHORTAGE  
PRODUCT INFORMATION DATABASE 160 SHOWN IN FIG. 1

160

PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	REGISTERED STORE	DATE OF REGISTRATION	
0000000002	STORE A	2001/04/12	
0000000001	STORE B	2001/04/14	



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## FIG.7

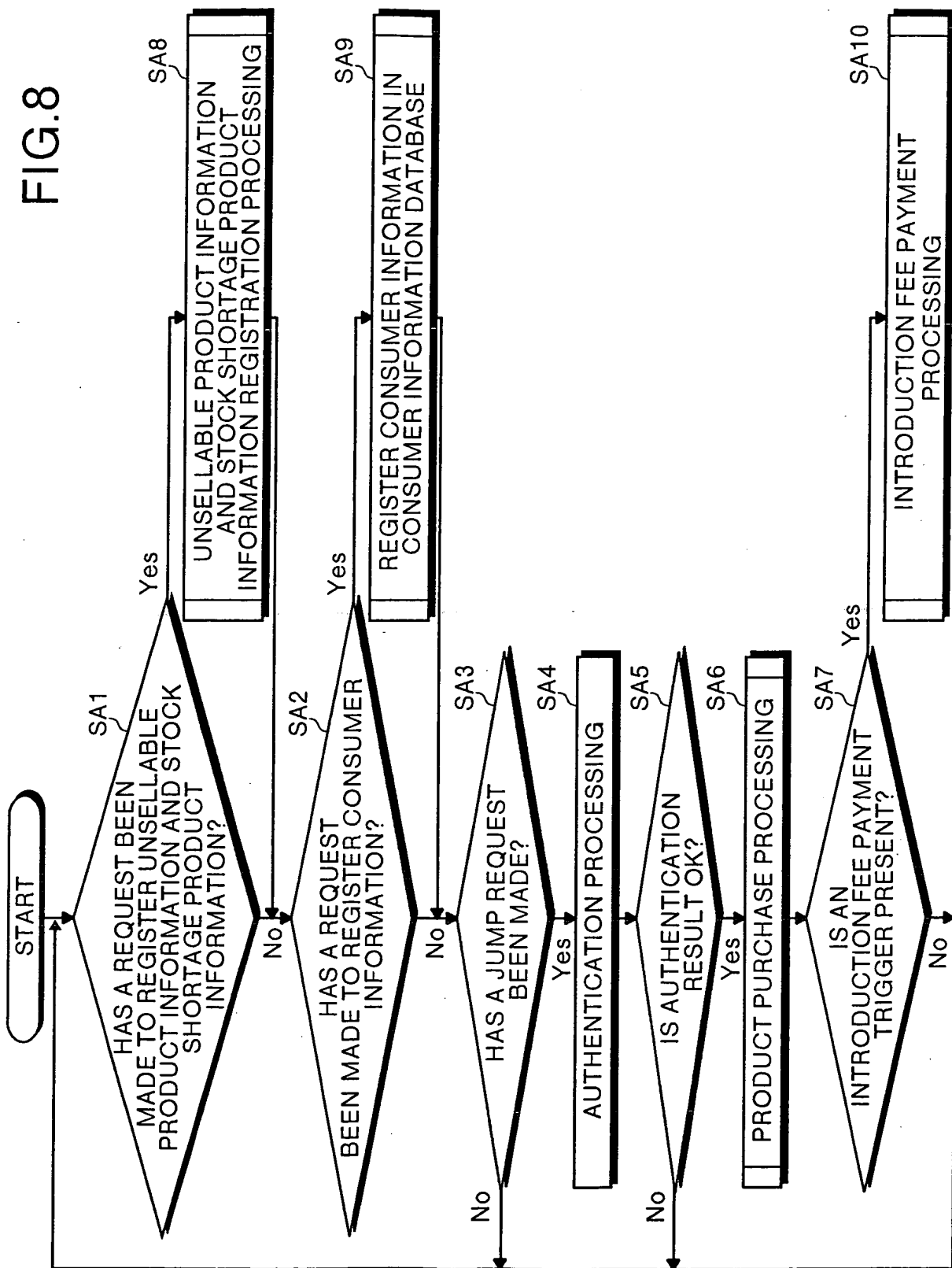
A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE TABLE STRUCTURE OF THE INTRODUCTION  
INFORMATION DATABASE 170 SHOWN IN FIG. 1

170

INTRODUCTION SOURCE STORE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	INTRODUCTION DESTINATION STORE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	CONSUMER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	DATE OF INTRODUCTION	
SHOP001	SHOP002	USER00001	2001/06/05	

A FLOW CHART WHICH EXPLAINS THE OPERATION OF THE PRODUCT CATALOG SERVER 100 SHOWN IN FIG. 1

FIG.8

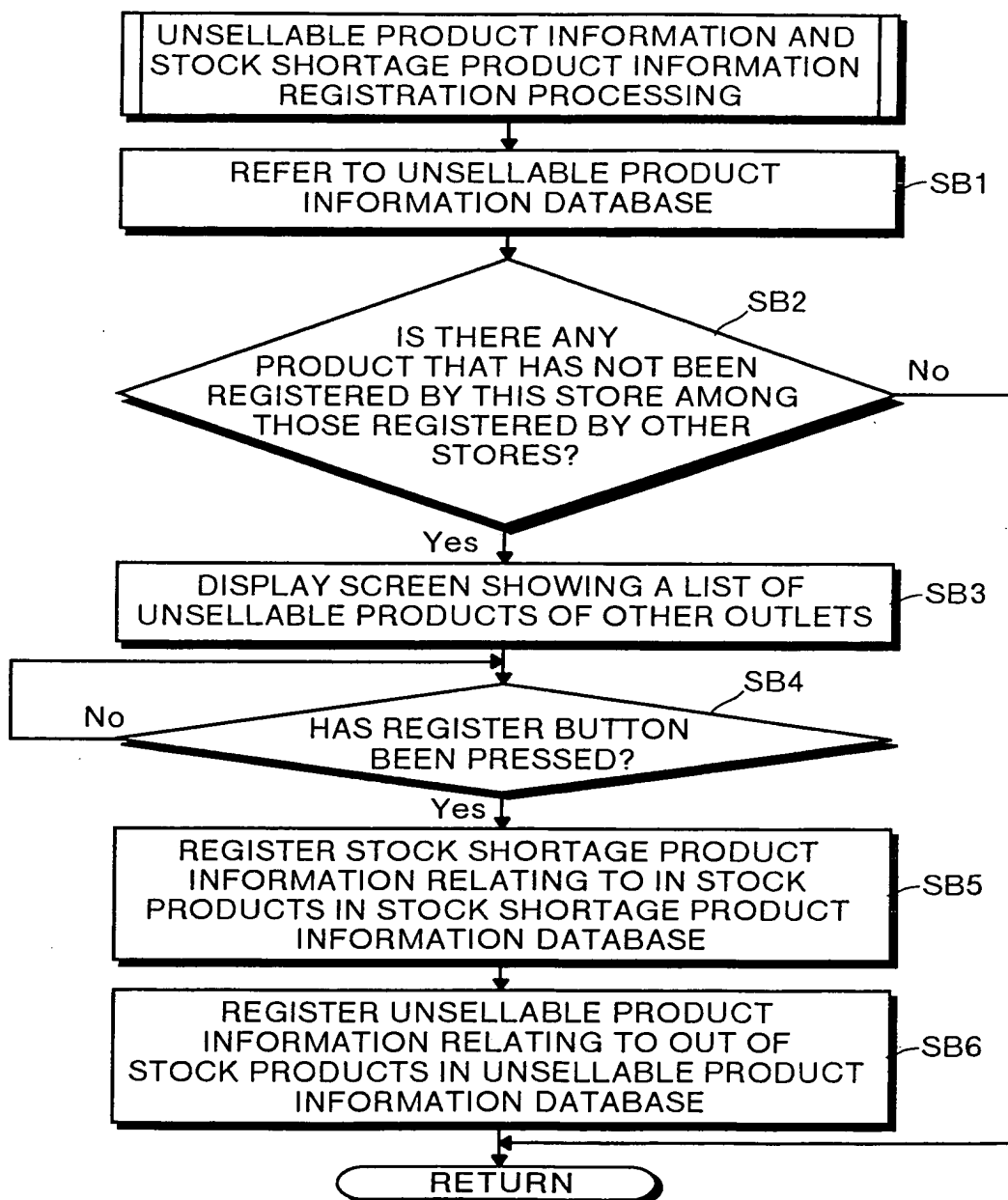




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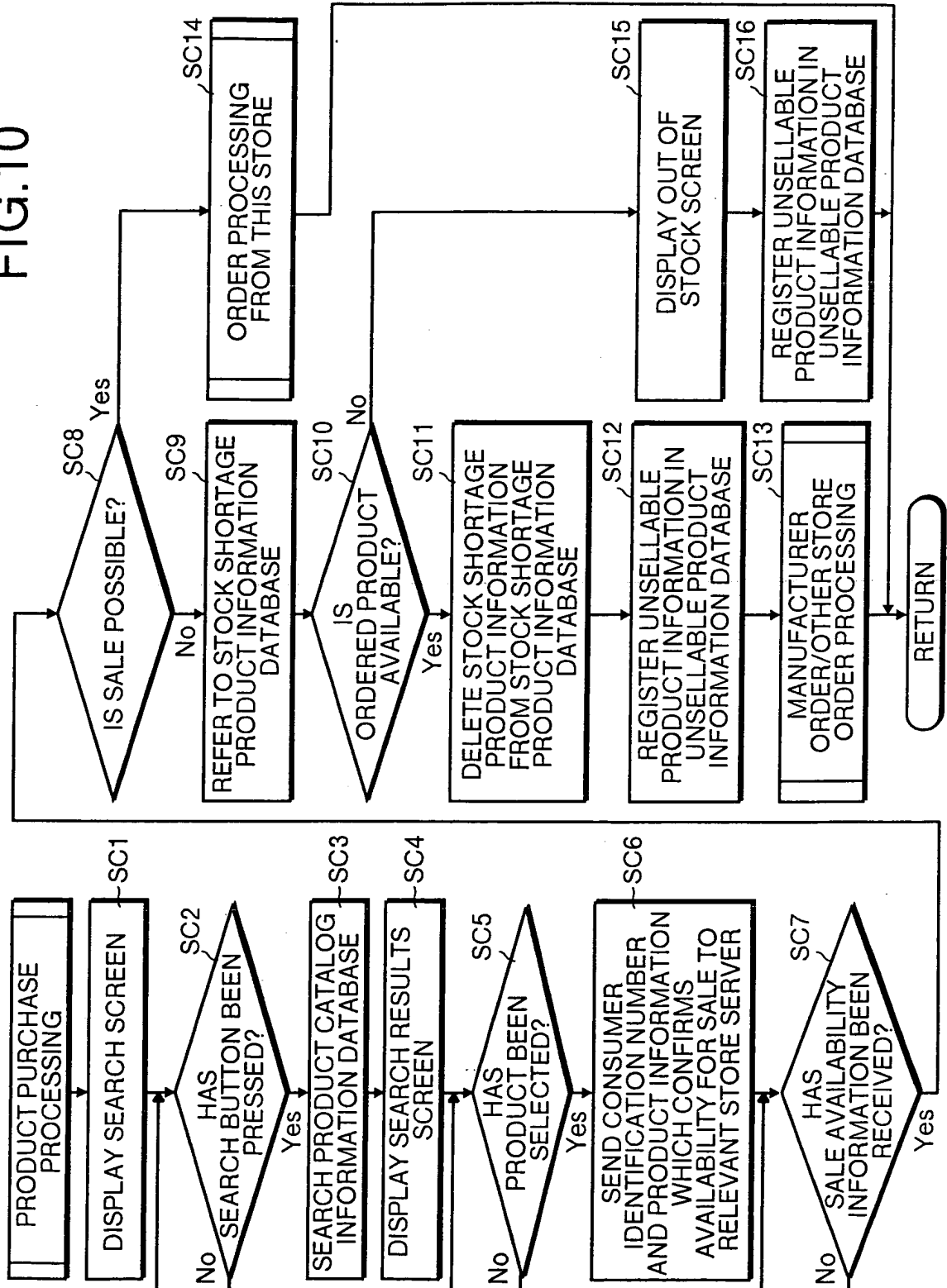
## FIG. 9

A FLOW CHART WHICH EXPLAINS THE UNSELLABLE PRODUCT INFORMATION AND STOCK SHORTAGE PRODUCT INFORMATION REGISTRATION PROCESSING SHOWN IN FIG. 8



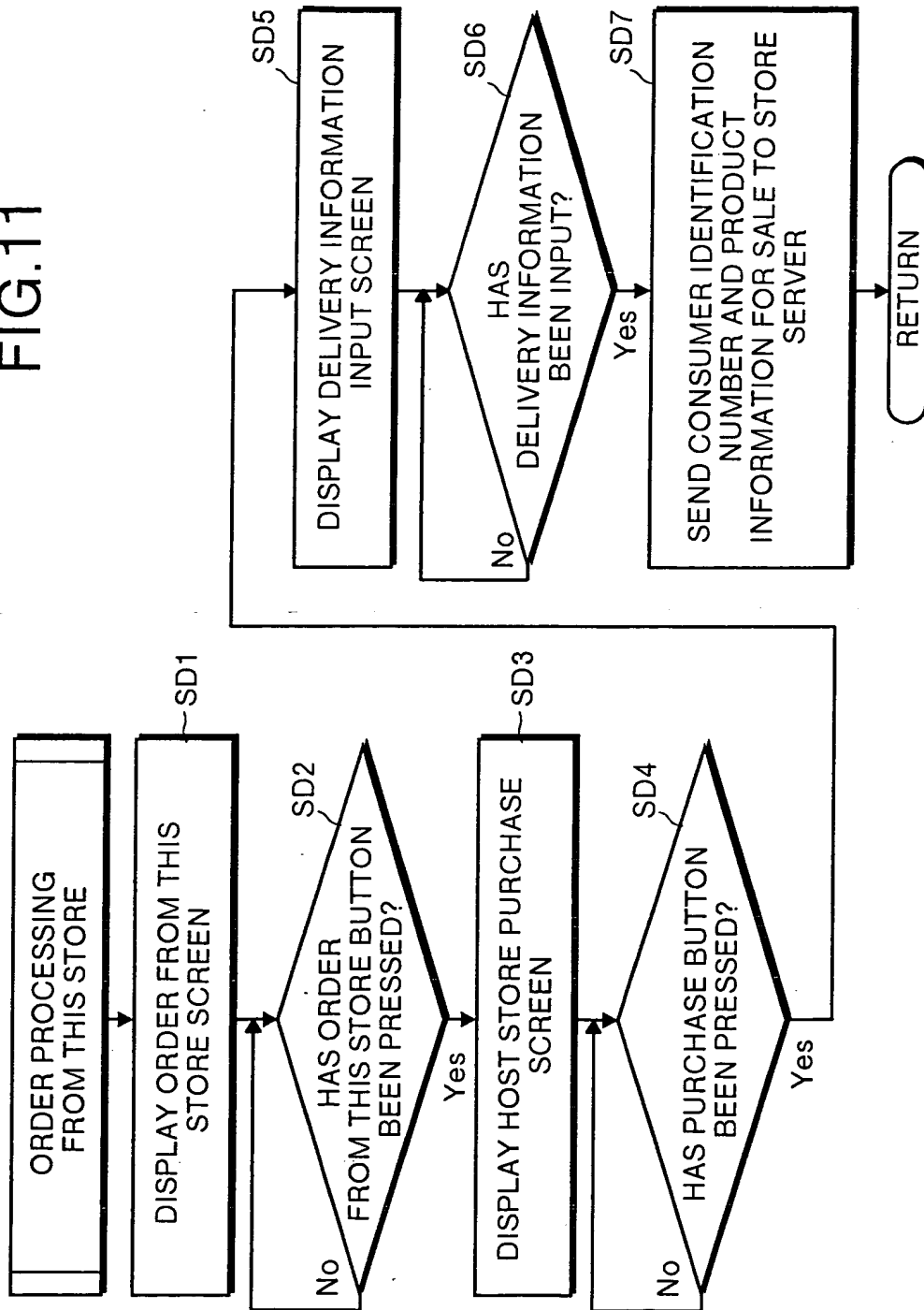
A FLOW CHART WHICH EXPLAINS THE PRODUCT PURCHASE PROCESSING SHOWN IN FIG. 8

FIG.10



A FLOW CHART WHICH EXPLAINS THE ORDER PROCESSING FROM THE HOST OUTLET SHOWN IN FIG. 10

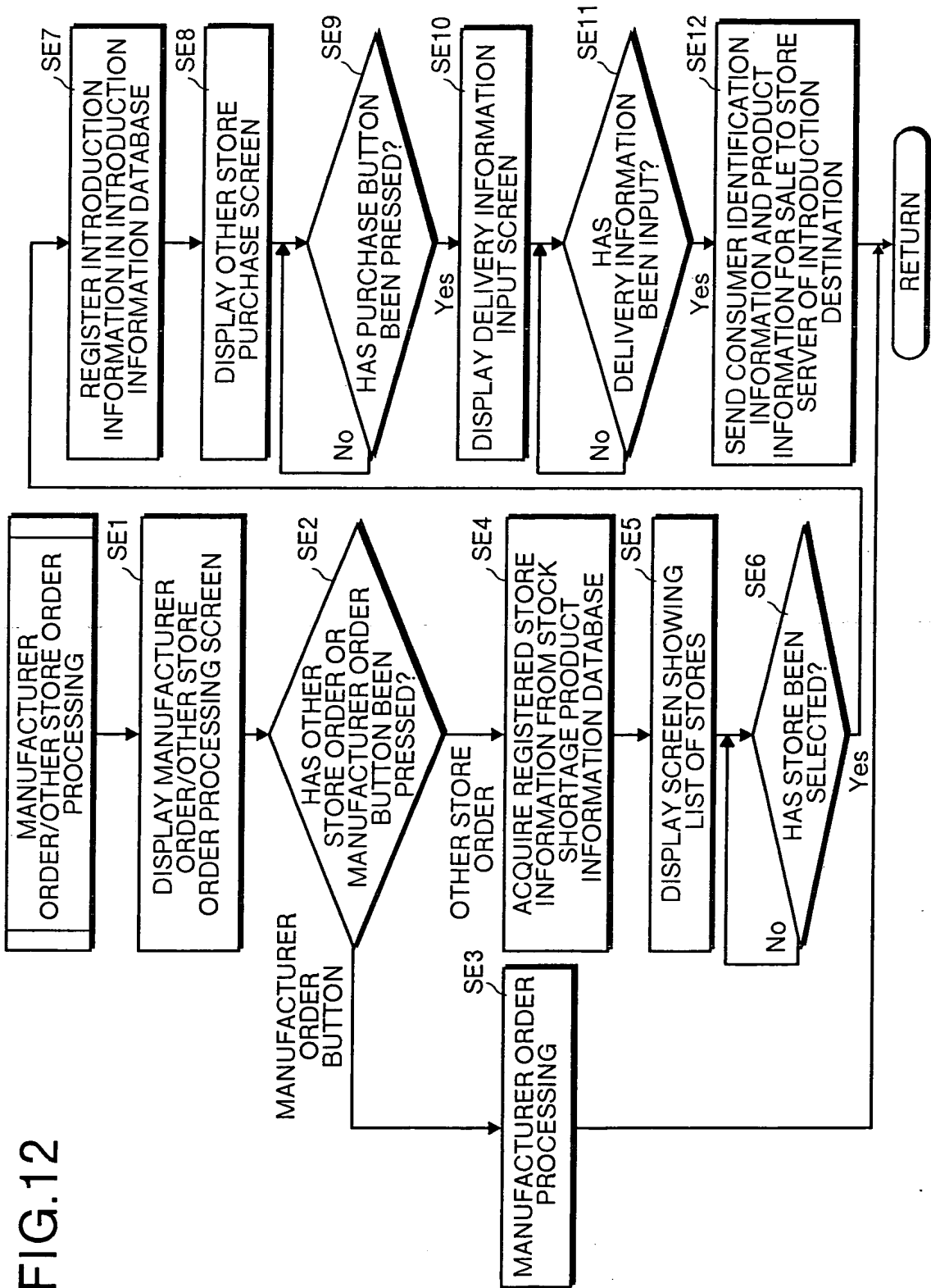
FIG.11





A FLOW CHART WHICH EXPLAINS THE MANUFACTURER ORDER/ OTHER OUTLET ORDER PROCESSING SHOWN IN FIG. 10

FIG.12

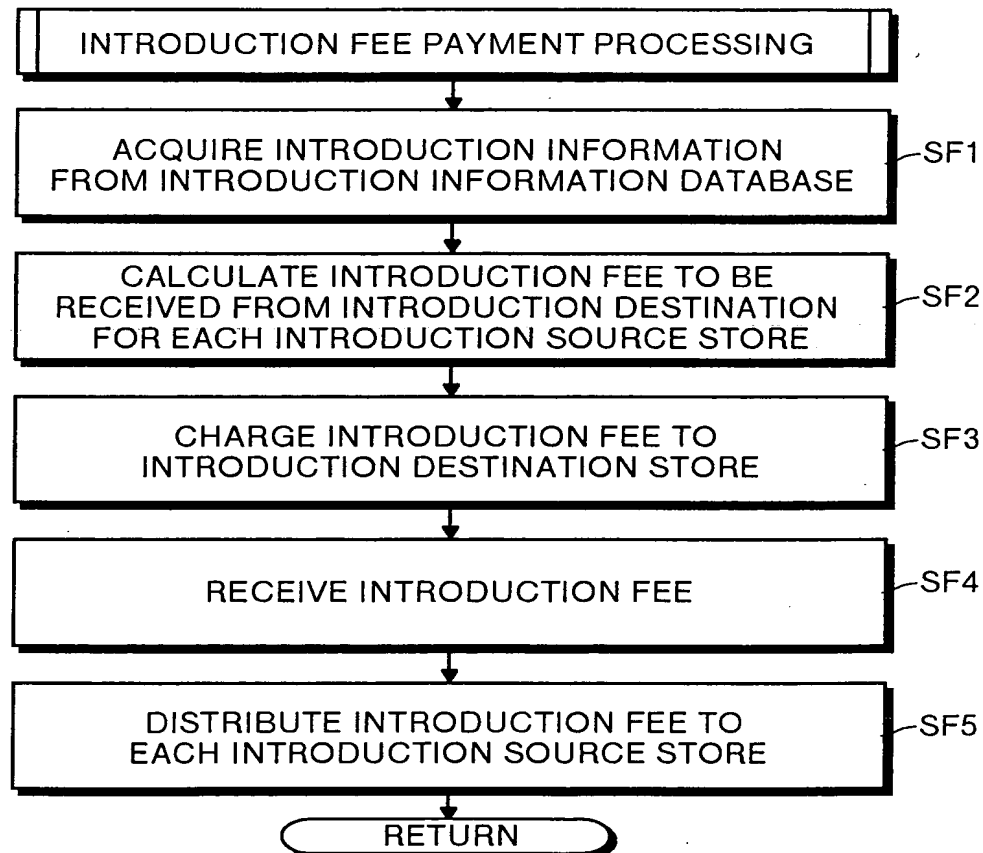




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## FIG.13

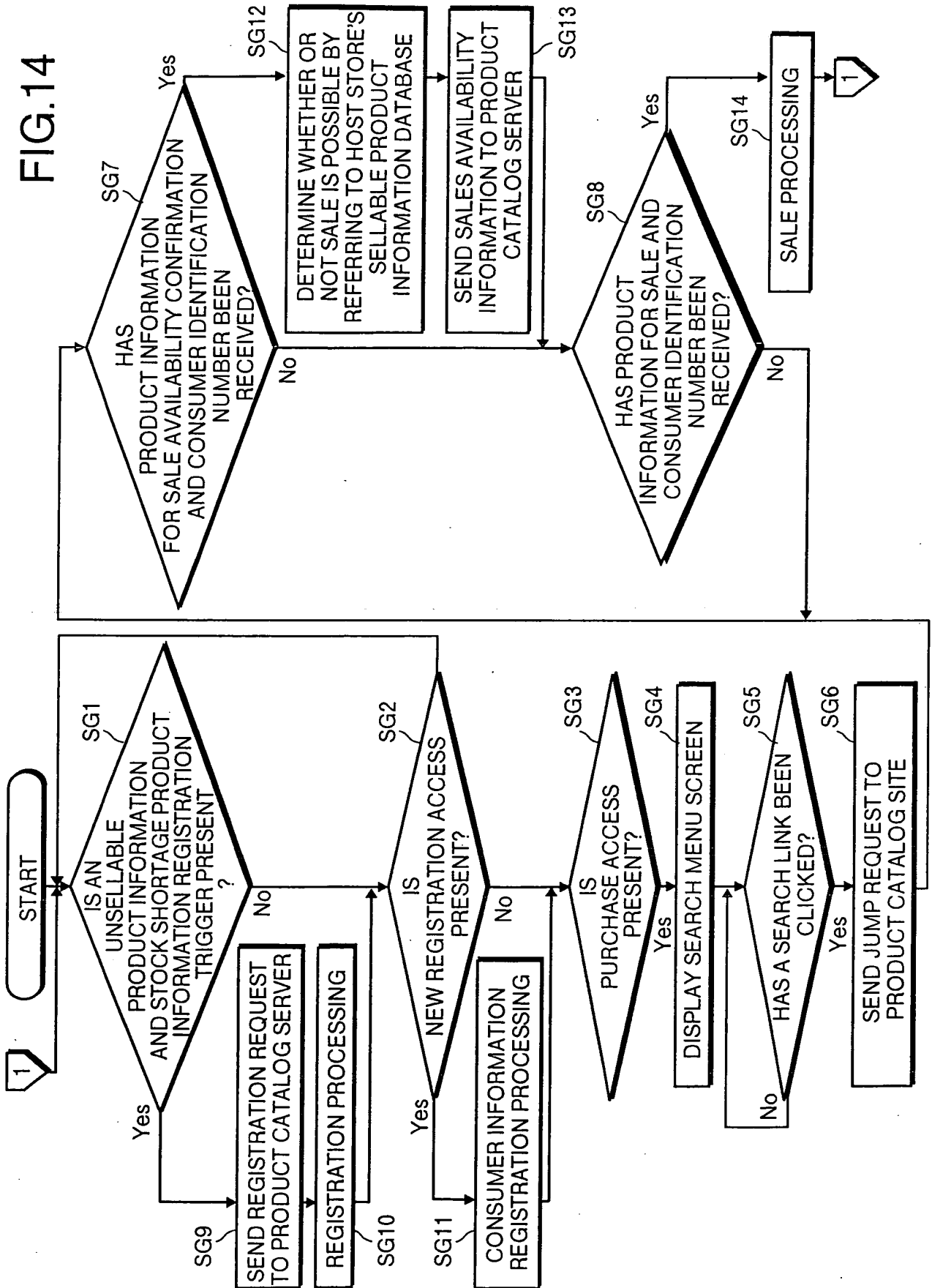
A FLOW CHART WHICH EXPLAINS THE INTRODUCTION FEE PAYMENT PROCESSING SHOWN IN FIG. 8



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FIG. 14

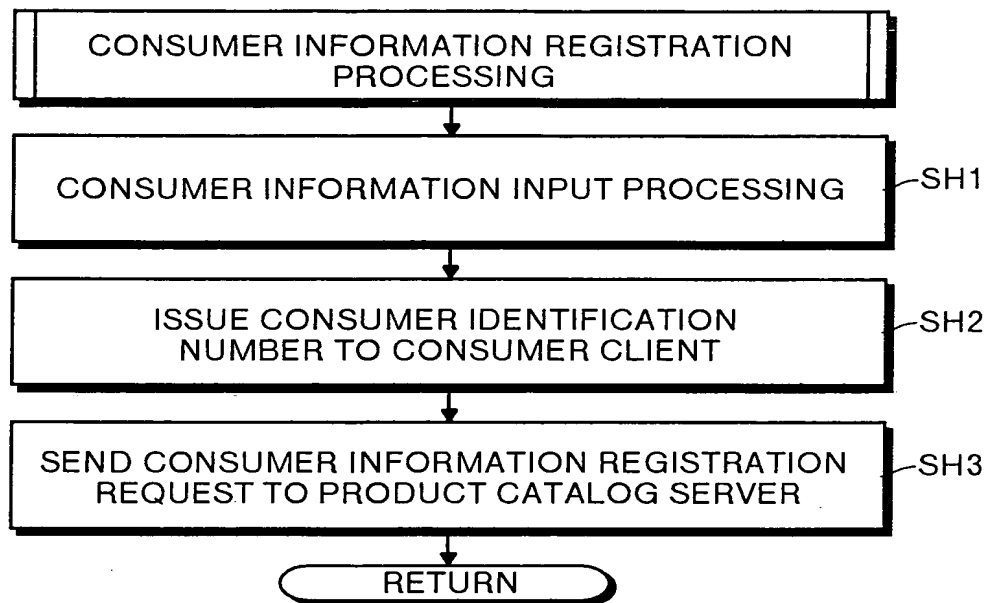
A FLOW-CHART WHICH EXPLAINS THE OPERATION OF THE STORE SERVERS 300<sub>1</sub> TO 300<sub>n</sub> SHOWN IN FIG. 1





## FIG.15

A FLOW CHART WHICH EXPLAINS CONSUMER INFORMATION REGISTRATION PROCESSING SHOWN IN FIG. 14





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## FIG.16

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS OTHER OUTLET UNSELLABLE PRODUCT LIST SCREEN  
500 ACCORDING TO THE ONE EMBODIMENT

500

OTHER STORE UNSELLABLE PRODUCT LIST		
PRODUCT NAME	IN STOCK	OUT OF STOCK
THE DIGITAL TELEVISION WAR BETWEEN JAPAN AND AMERICA	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
XXX	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
XXX	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
XXX	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
XXX	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

501

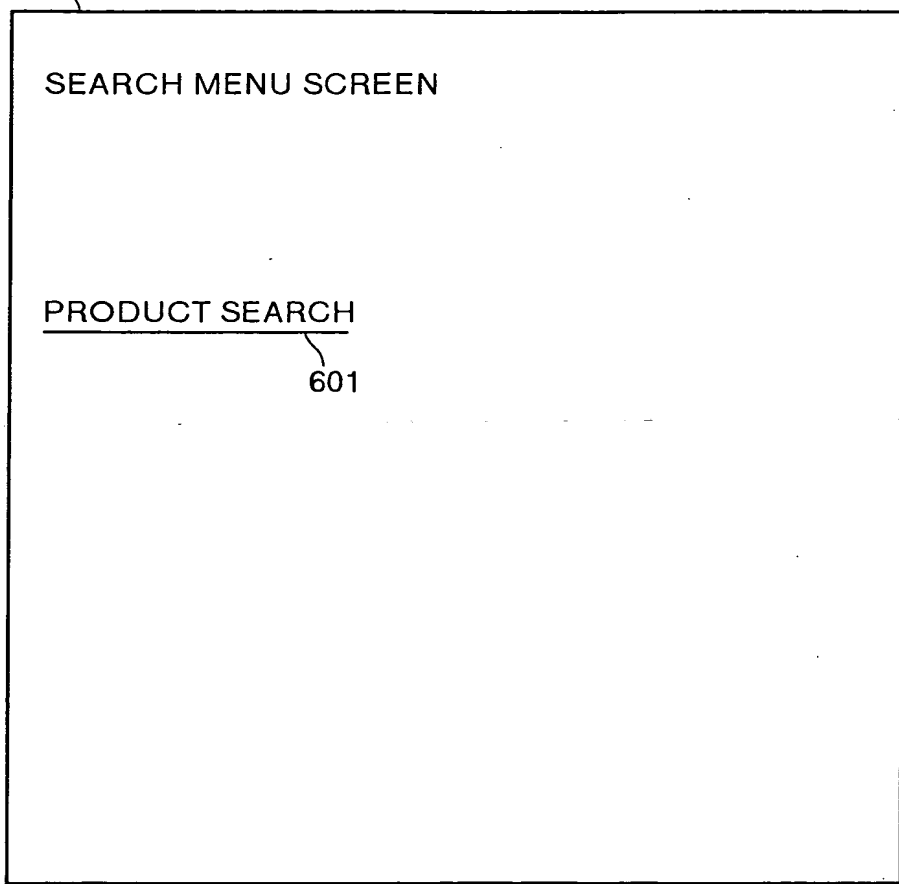
REGISTER



## FIG. 17

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE SEARCH MENU SCREEN 600 IN THE ONE EMBODIMENT

600





## FIG. 18

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE SEARCH SCREEN 700 IN THE ONE EMBODIMENT

700

SEARCH SCREEN

TITLE

ARTIST

SONG  
NAME

GENRE  ▼

701

SEARCH



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## FIG. 19

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE SEARCH RESULT SCREEN 800 IN THE ONE EMBODIMENT

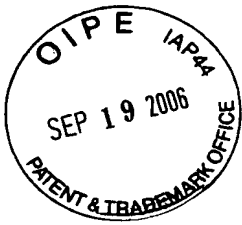
800

SEARCH RESULT SCREEN

PRODUCT LIST

- JUDY AND MAMY/The Great Escape
- JUDY AND MAMY/BE AMBITIOUS 801
- JUDY AND MAMY/SONG COLLECTION (INSTRUMENTAL)
- BROTHERS/SPEED





## FIG. 20

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE SCREEN 900 WHICH ORDERS FROM THIS OUTLET  
IN THE ONE EMBODIMENT

900

THIS STORE ORDER SCREEN

PRODUCT DETAILS

BROTHERS/SPEED

CUHN/SOMY KSD2 1086

APRIL 21, 1995 ¥1,020

SONG LIST

(1) SPEED

(2) FEEL GOOD FAMILY • AFFAIR

[YUKI(JUDY AND MAMY)(cho)]

(3) SPEED (ORIGINAL KARAOKE)

COMMENT

(2) = WITH YUKI FROM

JUDY AND MAMY

901 — ORDER FROM  
THIS STORE

## FIG. 21

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE SCREEN 1000 WHICH ORDERS FROM THE HOST OUTLET IN THE ONE EMBODIMENT

1000

HOST STORE PURCHASE  
SCREEN (STORE A)

BASKET

MANUFACTURER	PRODUCT NAME	SALE PRICE
KS	BROTHERS /SPEED	¥1,020

TOTAL PRICE: ¥1,020

1001

BUY



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## FIG. 22

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE DELIVERY INFORMATION INPUT SCREEN 1100 IN THE ONE EMBODIMENT

1100

DELIVERY INFORMATION  
INPUT SCREEN

PLEASE INPUT DELIVERY  
DESTINATION

TARO FUJITSU  
XXX TYUOU-KU TOKYO 165-0027  
TEL. 045-2365-1547



## FIG. 23

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE MANUFACTURER ORDER/ OTHER OUTLET ORDER SELECTION SCREEN 1200 IN THE ONE EMBODIMENT

1200

MANUFACTURER ORDER/  
OTHER STORE ORDER SELECTION SCREEN

"BROTHERS/SPEED" IS CURRENTLY NOT IN  
STOCK AT THIS STORE

TO ORDER "BROTHERS/SPEED" FROM ANOTHER  
STORE, PLEASE PRESS "ORDER FROM OTHER  
STORE" BUTTON

TO ORDER FROM THE MANUFACTURER, PLEASE  
PRESS "ORDER FROM MANUFACTURER" BUTTON  
(DELIVERY TIME WILL BE EXTENDED)

PRODUCT DETAILS

BROTHERS/SPEED

CUHN/SOMY KSD2 1086

APRIL 21, 1995 ¥1,020

SONG LIST

(1) SPEED

(2) FEEL GOOD FAMILY/AFFAIR

(3) SPEED (ORIGINAL KARAOKE)

COMMENT (2) = WITH YUKI FROM JUDY AND MAMY

1201

ORDER FROM  
OTHER STORE

1202

ORDER FROM  
MANUFACTURER



## FIG. 24

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE STORE LIST SCREEN 1300 IN THE ONE EMBODIMENT

1300

STORE LIST SCREEN

LIST OF STORES STOCKING  
"BROTHERS/SPEED"

- STORE B
- STORE N

## FIG. 25

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE OTHER OUTLET PURCHASE SCREEN 1400 IN THE ONE EMBODIMENT

1400

OTHER OUTLET PURCHASE  
SCREEN (STORE N)

BASKET

MANUFACTURER	PRODUCT NAME	SALE PRICE
KS	BROTHERS /SPEED	¥1,020

TOTAL PRICE: ¥1,020

1401

BUY



## FIG. 26

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE OTHER OUTLET ORDER SCREEN 1500 IN THE ONE EMBODIMENT

1500

### OTHER STORE ORDER SELECTION SCREEN

"BROTHERS/SPEED" IS CURRENTLY NOT IN STOCK AT THIS STORE

TO ORDER "BROTHERS/SPEED" FROM ANOTHER STORE, PLEASE PRESS "ORDER FROM OTHER STORE" BUTTON

#### PRODUCT DETAILS

BROTHERS/SPEED

CUHN/SOMY

APRIL 21, 1995 ¥1,020

#### SONG LIST

(1) SPEED

(2) FEEL GOOD FAMILY/AFFAIR

(3) SPEED (ORIGINAL KARAOKE)

COMMENT (2) = WITH YUKI FROM JUDY AND MAMY

1501

ORDER FROM  
OTHER STORE

FIG. 27

A BLOCK DIAGRAM WHICH SHOWS THE STRUCTURE OF A VARIANT EXAMPLE  
OF THE ONE EMBODIMENT

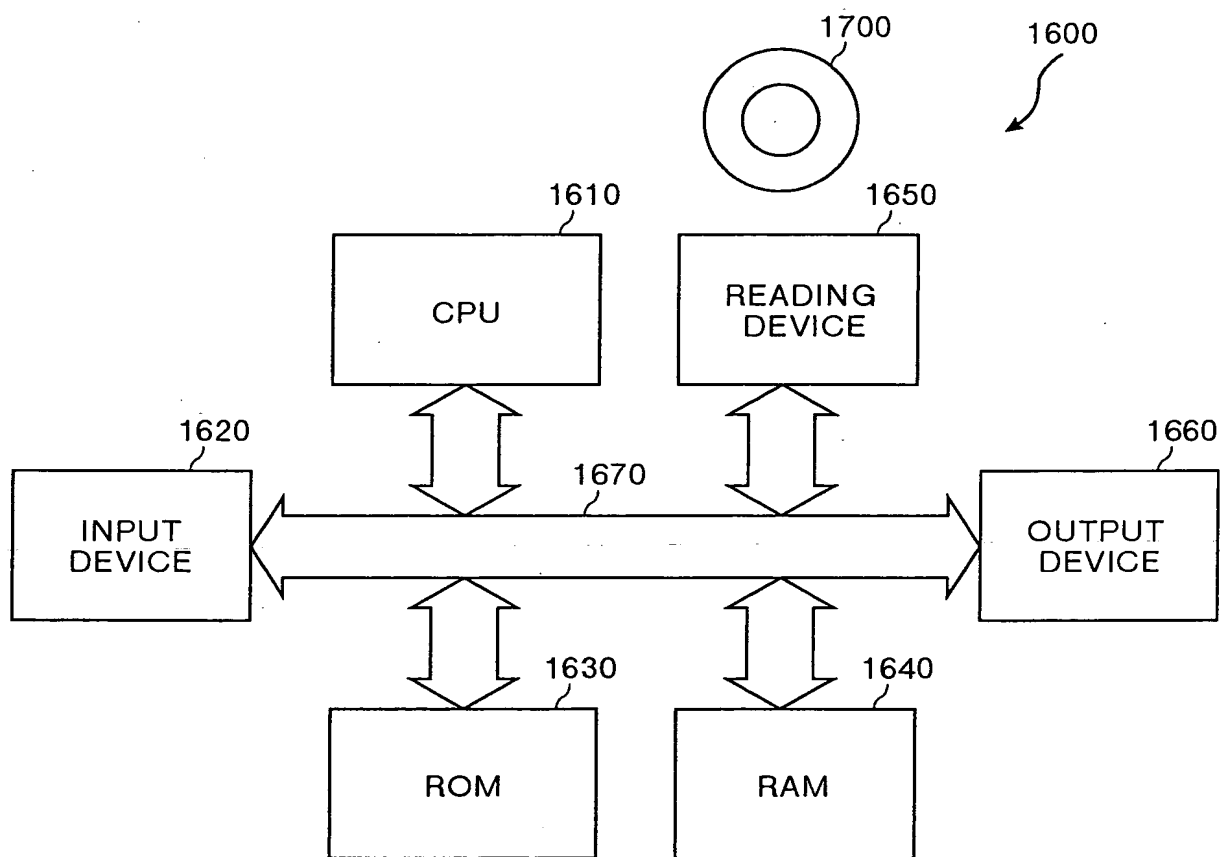




FIG. 28

A BLOCK DIAGRAM WHICH SHOWS THE STRUCTURE OF A CONVENTIONAL PRODUCT SALES SYSTEM

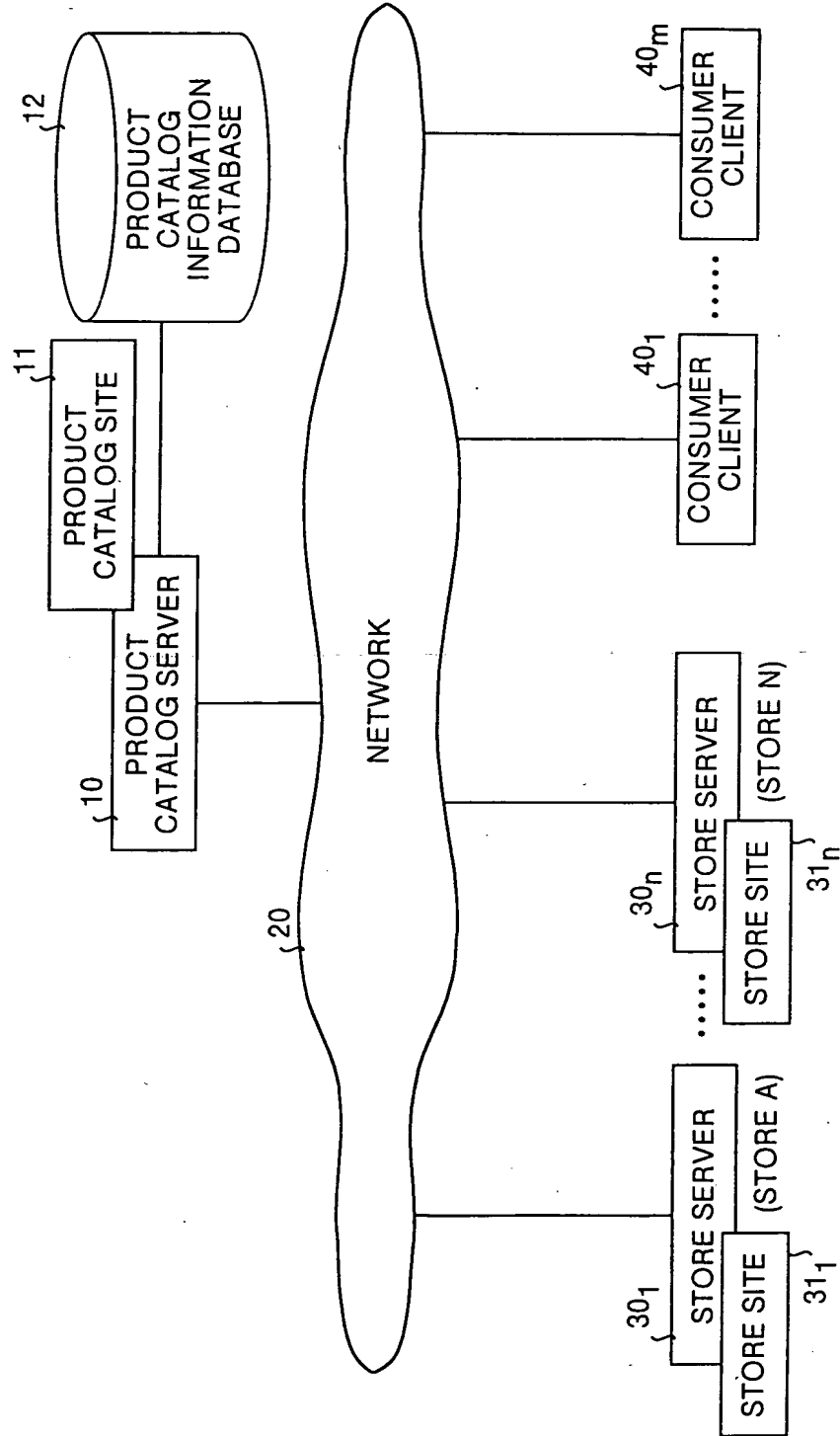


FIG. 29

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE SCREEN TRANSITIONS IN A CONVENTIONAL PRODUCT SALES SYSTEM

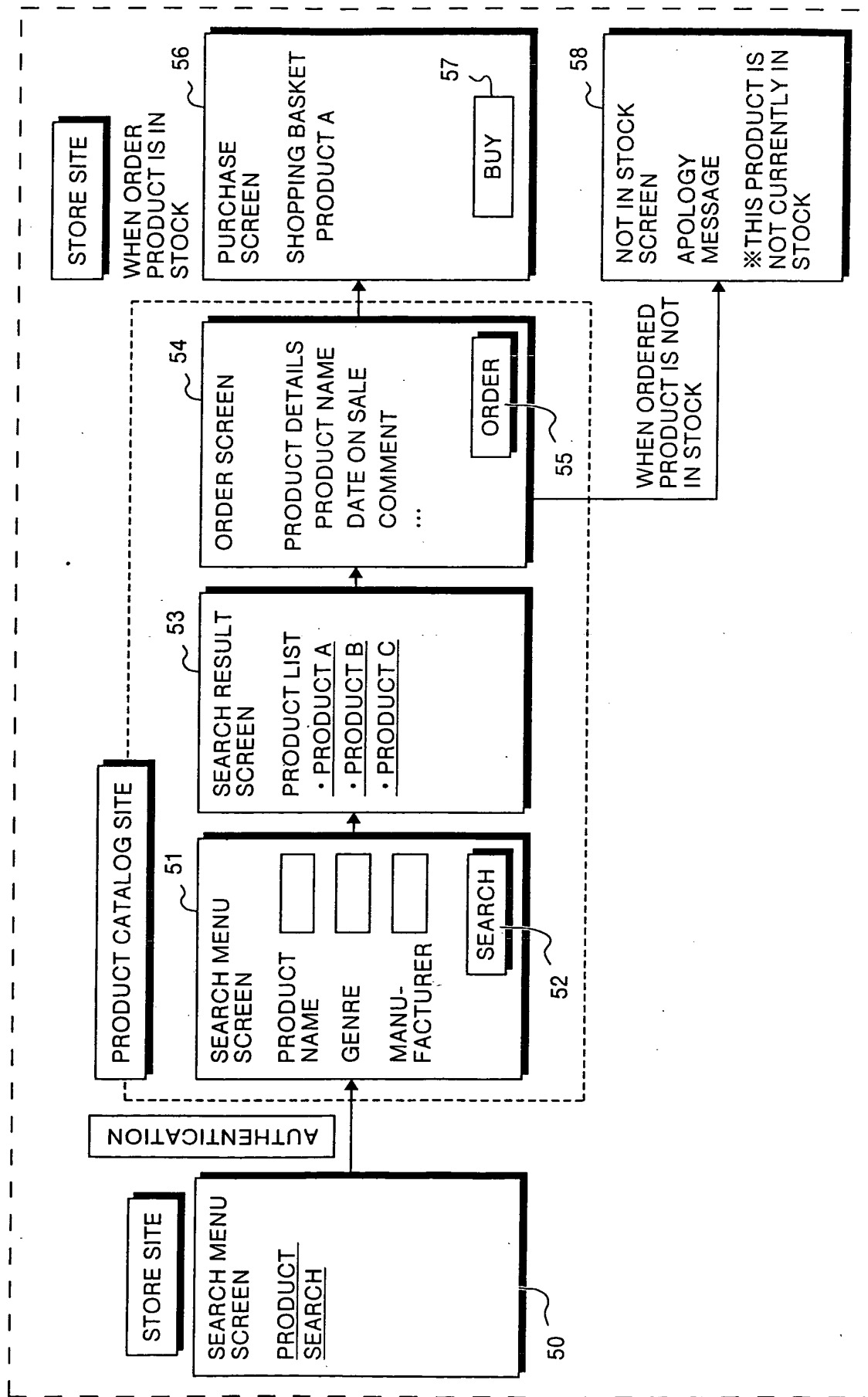


FIG. 30

A VIEW WHICH SHOWS THE SCREEN TRANSITIONS IN A CONVENTIONAL PRODUCT SALES SYSTEM

